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DR. WILLIAM KLASSEN  
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# THE SPIRIT OF LOVE;

OR,

A PRACTICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY

ON THE

FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.



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A PRACTICAL AND EXEGETICAL COMMENTARY

ON THE

## FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

BY THE

REV. W. GRAHAM.

MEMBER OF THE ROYAL-IRISH ACADEMY;  
HONORARY MEMBER OF THE ARABIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SYRIA;  
MEMBER OF THE ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE RHINE;  
AUTHOR OF "THE JORDAN AND THE RHINE," &c.

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1857.



TO ALL IN THE BRITISH ISLES

TO WHOM THE

*Spirit of Love*

IS DEAR,

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## PREFACE.

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THIS work originated in a series of Lectures on the Epistle, delivered in the University City of Bonn, and largely attended both by Germans and English. The blessing of the Lord seemed to rest on my labours, and many were attracted to the banner of the Cross. I give them now to the public, with the hope and prayer that the precious truth contained in them may be useful to some of the children of God in my native land. The times in which we live are ominous, and I wish to add my testimony, however feeble, to the witnesses, both in England and in Germany, who are contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. Rationalism, dethroned, but still powerful, on the Continent, is appearing among us: the preaching of the Cross, in which our fathers gloried, is, in many places, reduced to a system of intellectual mysticism, in which sentiment takes the place of the Saviour. The Protestant doctrine of Antichrist, on which the Reformation is based, and on which alone it can be justified, is doubted by many, and denied by not a few. The Church of Scotland is already broken up by the disruption; the Church of England is distracted by contending parties in her own communion; the Dissenters, always without unity, are shewing some symptoms of unsoundness in the faith; and, in the midst of all this

confusion and perplexity, worldliness and the love of pleasure seem to be increasing day by day. The burning love of former times, and the faith which made our fathers valiant for the truth, have been weakened by the principles of indifference and expediency. The Church and the world are inextricably blended together, like the wheat and the tares in the same field; ancient systems are rapidly yielding to new combinations; and the fabric of European society itself seems to be resting on a volcano. Now, if these things be so, the question arises, "What are the children of God to do? What is the duty of the Church?" This volume is my answer to that question. My aim is, to forget sects and systems, and, following the disciple whom Jesus loved, unfold, as far as I am enabled, the person and glory of the Mediator. The task has been pleasant to myself, and profitable to a few; and now, with fear and trembling, I commit it to Him who is able to make it a blessing to many.

## INTRODUCTION.

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I. WHO WROTE THIS BOOK? II. IS IT AN EPISTLE? III. WHO WERE THE FIRST READERS? IV. THE DATE: WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN? V. THE PURPOSE. VI. CONTENTS AND ARRANGEMENT. VII. AGAINST WHOM WAS IT WRITTEN? VIII. EXPLANATIONS.

### I. WHO WROTE THIS BOOK?

1. WE have only to consult the second volume of Lardner in order to see that the voice of all antiquity attributed our epistle to the Apostle John. The fathers of the eastern and western church were unanimously of the same opinion; so that, from the very beginning, while many other epistles were doubted, or only gradually received into the canon of scripture, it was held by the whole church to be a genuine work of the apostle whom Jesus loved, and an integral part of the word of God. Its divine breathings of love sustained the persecuted church in her apostolic labours, nerved the hands and the hearts of the heroes of the faith against their temporal and spiritual enemies, and inflamed the glorious army of the martyrs with a zeal and fervour which many waters could not quench, which the tempests of an angry agitated world could not extinguish, and which, in spite of all opposition from within and from without, in defiance of the rage of tyrants and the tumults of the nations, subjected to the cross the fairest regions of the civilized world. Polycarp,

Irenæus, Clement, Tertullian and Cyprian, Origen and Athanasius, are all witnesses for the first epistle of John; so that, externally, there is no other part of the scripture better fortified against the attacks of the enemy.

2. It is certain, from *internal* evidence, that the same author wrote both the gospel and the epistle. The same sweet spirit of love reigns in them both, and the same form of apprehending the truth; the great doctrine of the believers' Sonship, and the infinite love of the Father in giving the Son for the family, are prominent in both; and there is scarcely any peculiarity as to the words, the style, the structure of the sentences in the gospel, which is not found in the epistle. Let us take a few examples. First, In the gospel of John,  $\phi\hat{\omega}\varsigma$ , "light," is very often used in a mystical sense, denoting God, Christ, and the splendour of the Christian system (John i. 4, 5, 7, 8. iii. 19, 20, 21. viii. 12. ix. 5. xi. 9, 10; compare 1 John i. 5, 7. ii. 8, 9, 10); "life,"  $\zeta\omega\eta$ , is a favourite word of John in the gospel, and is applied to Jesus as the fountain of divine fulness from which human salvation flows: He is the life; in Him is life; and all that remains apart from Him is in the wastes and corruption of death (John i. 4. iii. 36. vi. 48. x. 10. xi. 25; compare 1 John i. 1, 2. v. 20); in the gospel,  $\alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ , "*truth*," is used to denote the Saviour, and the system of divine verity which He revealed (John i. 14, 17. xiv. 6; compare 1 John i. 6, 8). So we have  $\pi\omicron\iota\epsilon\iota\nu\ \tau\eta\nu\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\nu$ , "to do the truth" (John iii. 31. 1 John i. 6);  $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\nu\alpha\iota\ \epsilon\kappa\ \tau\eta\varsigma\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ , "to be of the truth," denoting a real Christian (John xviii. 37; compare 1 John ii. 21. iii. 19); and the phrase  $\eta\ \alpha\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha\ \omicron\upsilon\kappa\ \epsilon\acute{\sigma}\tau\iota\nu\ \epsilon\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\hat{\omega}$ , "the truth is not in him" (John viii. 44. 1 John ii. 4), common to both. The same great importance is given to Christ's being  $\delta\ \Upsilon\acute{\iota}\omicron\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ , "the Son of God," in both (John i. 34, 50. v. 20, 23; compare 1 John ii. 23;) to the sending of the Saviour from heaven (John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 9); and to His atoning love (John i. 29; compare 1 John i. 7. ii. 2. iv. 10). In both, and nowhere else, Jesus Christ is called  $\delta\ \mu\omicron\upsilon\omicron\sigma\gamma\epsilon\nu\eta\varsigma$ , "the only-begotten Son of



God;" in neither is conversion, or penitence, or repentance ever used, while in both, and nowhere else, the strong word γεννάω, "to beget," and "to be born," is applied to the Father and the Holy Spirit, and to believers (John i. 13. iii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; compare 1 John ii. 29. iii. 9. v. 1, 4, 18); in both, and nowhere else, do we find the word παράκλητος, "Comforter or Advocate," which John applies to the Spirit and the Son (John iv. 16, 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7; compare 1 John ii. 1); in both, and nowhere else, we find the word ἀνθρωποκτόνος, "murderer" (John viii. 44. 1 John iii. 15); in both, and nowhere else, we find ἡ καινὴ ἐντολὴ, "the new commandment," (John xiii. 34; compare 1 John ii. 7, 8). Surely such expressions shew clearly that both were written by the same author, or, if they do not, it is impossible to prove authorship from internal evidence. Secondly, consider how often the same peculiar phrases occur in both, such as αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία, "this is the message, this is the commandment, this is the condemnation, this is the record," &c. (John i. 19. iii. 19. vi. 29, 40. xv. 12. xvii. 3; compare 1 John i. 5. iii. 11. ii. 25. iii. 23. iv. 2, 21); ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ εἶναι, "to be of God," (John vii. 17. viii. 14; compare 1 John iii. 10. iv. 1); ἐκ τοῦ διαβολοῦ εἶναι, "to be of the devil," (John viii. 44; compare 1 John iii. 8); ἐκ τοῦ κοσμοῦ εἶναι, "to be of the world" (John viii. 23; compare 1 John iv. 5); ἐκ τοῦ κοσμοῦ λαλεῖν, "to speak of the world" (John iii. 31; compare 1 John iv. 5); ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, "we dwell in Him and He in us" (John vi. 56. xv. 4; compare 1 John iv. 13, 14); ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, or ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατεῖν, "to walk in darkness or in the light" (John viii. 12. xii. 35; compare 1 John i. 6. ii. 11); ὁρᾶν τὸν Θεόν, "to see God" (John i. 18. vi. 46; compare 1 John iv. 20); γινώσκειν τὸν Θεὸν, or Χριστὸν, "to know God or Christ" (John xv. 3. xvii. 25; compare 1 John ii. 3, 4, 13, 14. iv. 6, 7, 8. v. 20); ἔχειν ἁμαρτίαν, "to have sin" (John ix. 41. xv. 22, 24. xix. 11; compare 1 John i. 8); ἔχειν τὴν ζωὴν, "to have life, or to have eternal life" (John iii. 15, 36. v. 24, 39, 40. vi. 40, 47, 54. x. 10; compare 1 John iii. 15, v. 12); τὴν ψυχὴν ἑαυτοῦ τιθέναι, "to lay down his life for his

people" (John x. 11, 17, 18. xv. 13; compare 1 John iii. 16); *νικᾶν τὸν κόσμον*, "to overcome the world" (John xvi. 33; compare 1 John v. 4. ii. 13, 14. iv. 4); *ματαβαίνειν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν*, "to pass from death unto life" (John v. 24; compare 1 John iii. 14); *οὐκ οἶδε ποῦ ὑπάγει*, "he knoweth not whither he goeth" (John xii. 35; compare 1 John ii. 11); *δύνασθαι* is used in both in the sense of moral ability (John v. 44. viii. 43. xiv. 17; compare 1 John iii. 9. iv. 20). It is the manner of John in his gospel to assert, and then, to make the assertion stronger, deny the contrary: John i. 20, *ὡμολόγησε καὶ οὐκ ἡρνήσατο* "he confessed and denied not;" so John i. 3. iii. 20, 36. v. 24. vi. 22. vii. 18. xvi. 29, 30; compare this with 1 John i. 5, 8. ii. 4. 10, 27, 28). Such are some of the coincidences and similar forms of expression which lead us to the conviction, that he who wrote the gospel wrote the epistle also. The evidence is indeed so strong, that, till within the last few years, it has hardly ever been doubted since the beginning of the Christian era; and Baur and his party have given no arguments sufficient to shake this conviction; but seeing the similarity as to the style and mode of thinking could not be denied, they have arrived at an equally fatal conclusion on the other extreme, viz. that the imitation is so slavish and manifest, as to betray a different author, who wished to impose his epistle upon the church as the work of the apostle John. Indeed, the object of this entire new school of criticism is, to deprive the Bible of all binding authority over the conscience, and reduce Christianity to the level of the mythologies of the heathen. But their efforts have been in vain, and the word of God is becoming dearer to the German people every day. On the whole, we may conclude, that though the apostle does not name himself in the epistle, yet the external and internal evidence united give us the highest moral certainty that John was its author. This is indeed a point of much consequence to the convictions of the believer. We may have the full confidence, when we read this loving epistle, that we are reading the words of the disciple whom Jesus loved

—who leaned on his breast, and drew his treasures from the divine Fountain-head. The deep and calm spirit of all-enduring, all-conquering love, which pervades this epistle, comes from the heavenly Master, and leads the soul back to Him again; and every draught only increases our desires for more, until we are drawn nearer to Himself—to his glorious, adorable person, the God-man (as John saw Him), in whom we have the boundless, bottomless ocean of Jehovah's love and mercy opened up for a perishing world. Here, led by the spirit of our apostle, we lose all our guilty fears, for there is no fear in love, and perfect love casteth out fear.

## II. IS IT AN EPISTLE?

This has been keenly debated, both in England and Germany, nor is the controversy altogether settled. I believe it is not an appendix to the gospel of John, nor a collection of aphorisms, nor a moral essay, nor a theological disquisition on the mystical relations between God and the church, nor a controversial treatise on the errors of the heretics. The various views that have been taken of the epistle are neither altogether false nor contradictory. The same subject may have many sides; and, seen from different directions, may present different aspects to the various beholders. I believe the form is, however, essentially epistolary. First, As Paul commences his epistles by stating his heavenly call to the office of the apostleship (Rom. i. 1. 1 Cor. i. 1. 2 Cor. i. 1, &c.), so the apostle John does the same, though in another form, stating that he had heard, seen, and handled the incarnate Word (1 John i. 1). Secondly, As the essence of an epistle seems to be the addressing absent persons as if they were present, so here the apostle everywhere addresses his readers (i. 3. ii. 1, 7, 12 — 15, 18, 20, 23, 24). He exhorts them, warns them, and, in the free, confidential manner customary in letters, entreats them to avoid or resist the temptations with which they are surrounded. Thirdly, The ancient traditions from the earliest times have reckoned it among

the epistles. It was always placed as a separate epistle in the canon, and never attached as an appendix to the gospel of John.

### III. TO WHOM WAS THE EPISTLE DIRECTED ?

The Latin inscription, *ad Parthos*, to the Parthians, which Augustine adopted, is an error which has been accounted for in many ways. John never travelled in Parthia. Besides, we learn from the epistle itself that those to whom he wrote were his disciples (ii. 7, 8) ; they were all, or the majority of them at least, Gentile converts (v. 21), who needed to be warned against idolatry : he knew their circumstances, so that he could give proper warnings and exhortations to the different classes (ii. 12, 13, 14, 18, 19, 26, 27). The epistle is nothing but a continuing of what was his manner of teaching the disciples of the Lord among whom he exercised his apostleship. It is therefore probable, that as Asia-Minor was the scene of his labours after the Jewish wars and the destruction of Jerusalem (De Wette, *Introd.*, Section 108.), so the Christian churches in Ephesus and the surrounding regions were those to whom the apostle wrote. There is a very ancient and well-authenticated tradition, that, in his old age, the apostle lived and laboured in Ephesus. His great authority as an apostle, and his venerable character, contributed above all things to confirm and consolidate the churches planted by the apostle Paul. The most wild doctrines, heresies, and speculations of every kind had sprung up in and around the church, as was indeed natural and necessary when such a new and heavenly system as Christianity was planted among the corrupt nations of heathenism ; and John's apostolic teaching was the fit and proper authority for correcting all such erroneous opinions, and steadying the wavering convictions of the church. It agrees well with this ancient tradition if we suppose that the epistle was sent by the aged apostle to these various churches in Asia-Minor. This, therefore, I hold to be the most probable opinion.



## IV. FROM WHAT PLACE DID HE WRITE ?

There are no traces, either in the epistle itself, or in ancient ecclesiastical history, by which we can with certainty answer this question. Some suppose it was written from the isle of Patmos during the banishment of the apostle for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus ; but it is hardly probable, if such were the case, that there would not be some hints and allusions to his captivity in the epistle. Besides, is it not an historical fact, and as such admitted by Neander, that John had for a considerable time his residence in Ephesus ? Surely, then, it is the most natural hypothesis, since historical certainty is impossible, that in his own city of Ephesus he wrote his epistle, and sent it as a circular to the circumjacent churches. In Rev. ii. and iii. a number of these churches are mentioned ; and we cannot suppose any thing more natural than that the apostle to whom was committed the care of the churches should take this means of fulfilling the intentions of his Master, and manifesting, at the same time, his pastoral and apostolical love.

## V. THE DATE : WHEN WAS IT WRITTEN ?

In the epistle itself there is no trace given that can lead us to the date. Two passages have indeed been pressed into the controversy to shew its early date: First, John says (ii. 18), “ Little children, it is the last time,” *ἔσχατη ὥρα ἐστί*, which some apply with great confidence to the destruction of Jerusalem, and consequently the apostle wrote before that event. But I would ask any calm, unprejudiced person to read the passage, and say does it necessarily or naturally refer to the destruction of the holy city ? Besides, we dare not take the *ὥρα* of the apostle John apart from the other times and seasons mentioned in the New Testament. Read and compare the following: *καιρὸς ἔσχατος* (1 Pet. i. 5); *ἔσχατοι τῶν χρόνων* (1 Pet. i. 20); *ἔσχάται ἡμέραι* (Acts ii. 17. 2 Tim. iii. 1. Heb. i. 1. Jas. v. 3); *ἔσχάται τῶν ἡμερῶν* (2 Pet. iii. 2); *ὑστεροὶ καιροὶ* (1 Tim. iv. 1); *ἔσχατος χρόνος* (Jude 18).



Now surely all these do not refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. If they do, then there is but one step more to take, and we must take it, as many of the Germans have already done, viz. to maintain that the hope of the apostolic church was a fable never to be realized; that the *ἡ ἐσχάτη ἡμέρα*, the *ἡμέρα τοῦ Θεοῦ*, and the *ἡμέρα κρίσεως*, were fulfilled in the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth, and that of course neither kingdom nor coming of Christ, neither judgment of the world, nor resurrection of the dead, are to be expected any more. I maintain the reverse of all this. The “last hour,” “the last time” (Jude 18); “the latter times” (1 Tim. vi. 1); “the last days” (2 Pet. iii. 3; compare James v. 3. Heb. i. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1); “the last times” (1 Pet. i. 5); the “perilous times of the last days,” and all similar expressions, refer to the whole period of the present dispensation, though some of them may have a special reference to different parts of it. Does not *ᾠρα* (John iv. 21, 23), include the present dispensation? I maintain, also, that “hour” in John v. 25, comprehends the entire period during which the Father quickeneth the spiritually dead by the effusion of the Holy Ghost, viz. the present dispensation, from the incarnation to the second advent of Christ. It is the “little while” of the Saviour’s absence, during which the church’s sorrow continues; the night season when the sun is absent; the present age of the world (Eph. ii. 2), during which the prince of the power of the air rules in the children of disobedience. The following expressions refer to the same period: *ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος* (Matt. xii. 32. xiii. 22, 40. Mark iv. 19. Luke xx. 34. Rom. xii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 20. ii. 6. 8. iii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Eph. i. 21. vi. 12); *ὁ νῦν αἰὼν* (2 Tim. iv. 10. Tit. ii. 12); *ὁ ἀνεστῶς αἰὼν* (Gal. i. 4); *ὁ καιρὸς οὗτος* (Mark x. 13); *ὁ νῦν καιρὸς* (Rom. viii. 18). All these are characteristic of the whole period between the first and second advent of the Son of God. The scripture designations for the future period after the coming and kingdom of Christ are the following: *ὁ αἰὼν ὁ μέλλων* (Matt. xii. 32); *ὁ αἰὼν ὁ ἐρχόμενος* (Luke xviii. 20); *ὁ αἰὼν ἐκεῖνος*

(Luke xx. 34); ἡ οἰκουμένη ἡ μέλλουσα (Heb. ii. 5). From the whole we gather that there is no just ground to conclude, from 1 John ii. 18, that the epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. It is argued, also, that 1 John ii. 13, 14, agrees better with the early than the late date of the epistle; but this is based on a false translation of the words τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, as if the apostle had written αὐτὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. The apostle does not say, as Horne asserts, "Ye have known Him from the beginning," but "Ye have known Him who was from the beginning;" viz. "Ye have known the Eternal One, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God;" and ἀπ' ἀρχῆς does never, in the New Testament, refer to the commencement of the Christian dispensation. Beza, the Vulgate, and De Wette, translate, not "eum a principio" but "eum qui a principio est;" and so all the other translations which I have consulted, with the exception of Dr. Macknight, who gives a different translation, but adduces no sufficient grounds for it. Besides, it is by no means certain that γινώσκω refers to their personal intercourse with the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. vii. 23. 1 Cor. viii. 3. Gal. iv. 9). Nothing can be concluded with certainty as to the date of the epistle from these passages, and the most of what has been said on the subject has been little better than conjecture. There are others who, liking neither John nor his mystical doctrines of the eternal Logos, the fellowship of love, the incarnation and atonement of the Son of God, see in our epistle traces of the dotage, garrulity, and indistinctness of old age, for which De Wette and Lücke give them sufficient chastisement. Lardner thinks it was written between 80 and 90, and Macknight in the year 68; nor is there the least reason, from the epistle, from external evidence, or from the style, why we should prefer the one to the other. It is a genuine work of the Apostle John, and the exact date is of no importance.

#### V. WHAT WAS THE OCCASION ?

We may answer in general terms, that the apostles were all

guided and inspired by the Holy Ghost, so that the principal cause of John's writing the epistle was the command and authority of God. But as God works by means in accordance with the dictates of supreme wisdom, and suits the manifestations of his will to the wants and necessities of the various ages and dispensations of his providence, we can readily believe that the epistle was occasioned by the special wants and necessities of the church. The fervour of the first outbursting faith and zeal had subsided, and errors of every kind, within and without the church, had increased and multiplied with startling luxuriance. The adorable person of the divine Redeemer is the very centre of the Christian faith, and the whole of it must be judged of and defined according to the views which we entertain of Him. It is evident, both from the epistle and the gospel, that on this subject the seeds of many errors and heresies were already sown in the hearts of men. I would not read the epistle as an attack upon the errors of the Jewish teachers, or the judaizing Christians, or the Ebionites, or the Gnostics in general, or the Docetæ, or Cerinthus, or the disciples of John the Baptist, though the buds of all these errors were no doubt beginning to shew themselves. It is not a controversial tract, but a statement of truth, so noble, so distinct, and yet so general, that its value and power are not for one age, but for all ages; not for one, but for all nations and countries to the end of time. The human race is Adam dilated, and the believing church is but an extension and expansion of the official fulness of Christ: hence the earnest endeavour of the Spirit, and the apostles who ministered Him, that believers should walk worthy of their Master's love, holy, peaceful, pure, in fellowship with God, separated from the world, abundant in good works, and filled with the hope of life and immortality. There are many things to disturb the tranquillity of the believing soul; and the apostle, seeing these seeds of sin at work in the churches—worldliness, selfishness, the love of money, germs of the great expected antichrist, and wild, heretical tendencies on all hands—is led by the

Holy Spirit to write this very sweet and loving epistle, to settle the church on its true foundations, and shew forth the destiny both of the world and of worldly men. But this brings me to consider—

#### VI. THE PURPOSE OF THE APOSTLE IN IT.

We may admit with some that one great purpose of the apostle was to correct the errors that had sprung up in the church during the apostolic age; but we maintain that the all-seeing and all-directing wisdom of God has so guided his pen, that every believer, in every age to the end of time, has an interest in it all. He enters into the spirit of the risen Master, and seeks only, and always, to bear testimony to the reality of the great fact of facts, the surpassing wonder of inconceivable love, the incarnation of the eternal Son of God, in whom, and in whom alone, we can have fellowship with the Father of lights; in whom, and in whom alone, there is atoning mercy for the sins of the fallen world. He dwells in the secret place of divine love, and he would lead us onward and upward, in the life of faith and the communion of the Holy Ghost, to the perfect likeness of the Son of God.

“That to perfection’s sacred height  
We nearer still may rise,  
And all we say, and all we do,  
Be pleasing in His eyes.”

There are many of the children of God in whom the atoning love of Christ is not fully realized; who cannot, and will not, say that they know the peace of God. They are worldly, unloving, and, as the Apostle Paul says, carnal, and sold under sin; and surely it is one great object of our epistle to lead them with a tender hand to the fulness of the Lord Jesus Christ. He saw well the tendencies of the fallen, though redeemed nature, and the need we have of constant supplies of the spirit of Christ to enable us to oppose the evils within and without us, to crucify



the flesh and the world, and follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; and hence he points us to the heavenly unction, even the seven-fold fulness of the Holy Spirit, as the fountain which God has provided for satisfying the thirsty, quickening our withering affections, and shedding into the fainting spirit the strength and vigour of imperishable hopes. He draws the bonds that bind us to the Redeemer very closely; and seeks, by the light of God, and the atoning mercy of Christ, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, to extricate our feet from the snares of the fowler and the entanglements of the flesh and the world; to break the power of the fatal enchantment which makes sin pleasant to our souls, and sanctification a strange, difficult, and distasteful work; to crumble to pieces the earth-crust which, like a geological formation, hath gathered round our souls, and enlarge us into the dimensions and liberty of the sons of God. He touches a harp of many strings, but the music is still of heaven. He tells us our dangers from the world, and from antichrist, and from the devil; but he tells us, at the same time, the way to resist and overcome them. The character of the glorious, unknown, and all-powerful Creator, before whom the nations tremble and the very heavens are not pure, is perhaps the most attractive picture which has ever been presented to the eye and the hope of our perishing world. He is Light itself, and in Him is no darkness at all. His fatherly heart is the fountain-head of mercy to our race, which, like the prodigal, may seek repose on his willing bosom. He is the sender and giver of the only-begotten Son, whose humiliation, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, in our nature, to the right hand of God, are the measure of the Father's mercy and grace to his perishing children. He is not only loving, but He is love itself. "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." Oh how the ear of the sin-convicted creature wakens up to these notes from the heavenly sanctuary! They are indeed sweeter a thousand times to the heart of the earthly pilgrim than home to the exile, than rest to the weary, wounded veteran, or the meeting



again with wife and children after the loving and the good have been long separated from one another ! Could we but realize this idea of God ! Could we but live, labour, and testify in the unquenchable assurance that He is indeed love, pure, holy, eternal, unchangeable love ; that He really loves *us*, even *us—you and me* ; I mean, *you* who read and *me* who write these lines ; that the great *gift* was for *us* ; and the almighty heart of the great Father was indeed opened in love over us ! Is it so ? Dost thou believe it is so ? Oh if thou dost positively believe that fact, great is thy faith, brother, and thy soul will be like the rising sun, brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Do not fancy that the apostle is speaking to Gnostics, to Ebionites, or Docetæ : his clear statement of doctrine and duty does indeed oppose error and heresy on every side, but his words are for us and for all believers to the end of the world. His object is to lead us into the full assurance of faith, to the joyful recognition of our dignity and blessedness as the children of God, to the elevating and purifying hope of being with the Saviour, and like Him when He appears in his glory. He begins with Christ and ends with Him ; for in the mind of the Apostle John He is the alpha and omega of all that we need or desire, the alpha and omega, too, of all that is or can be known of the love, mercy, and power of the invisible God.

## VII. THE CONTENTS AND ARRANGEMENT.

As to the order and arrangement of the subjects in our epistle two parties are specially distinguished who stand in direct opposition to one another. One of these, at a loss to trace in it a clear and well-regulated train of thought, denied that there was any, and treated the whole as a collection of aphorisms, in which the inspiring Spirit followed no order save his own sovereign will ; *libertatem suam Spiritui Sancto in hac epistola concedendam esse*. According to these men, the expositor was to enter upon the epistle as a collection of proverbs, in which there was neither connection, coherence, nor arrangement ; *sine*

*certa aliqua ratione ordinis et cohærentiæ.* This extreme speedily led to the contrary one, in which it was asserted, and sought to be proved, that the apostle had formed in his mind a fixed plan, which, pen in hand, he filled up with the greatest regularity and exactness. These are the extremes, and the truth lies between them. There is order and harmonious arrangement in all the works and ways of God, not the less beautiful, but the more, because it is contrary to our preconceptions. In human actions and labours we must classify and arrange according to principles which rule in the small circle of our limited vision; and we are, owing to the limitation of our faculties, unable to subject our arrangements to the operation of a universal law. We do not find in the word of God one chapter on works and another on faith, one of justification and another on sanctification, one on the Trinity and another on the Divine Unity, as we do in the writings of men and confessions of faith. This difference shews the weakness of man and the perfection of God. He does not divide us into intellect and reason, the active and the moral powers; gratifying the fancy with one chapter, the reason with another, and the conscience with a third; but he addresses us as *men*, having various powers and faculties; and the best arrangement is that which will produce the greatest effect upon our complex and various nature. This is what the Bible does; and this is the all-pervading principle in the first epistle of John. There are variations of statement, but always beautiful; there are repetitions, but never more than necessary; and doctrine and duty, faith and practice, are perpetually brought into the closest connection with one another; so that the principle of arrangement is according to the highest ideas which we can form of the divine wisdom. John, filled with the power and presence of the Holy Ghost, speaks to us as living men out of the fulness of grace and love that was in his own heart, and this is what Episcopius asserts; “*Modus tractandus arbitriarius est neque ad artis regulas adstrictus—Sine rhetorico artificio aut logica accurata methodo institutus.*” Here we

may well apply the sagacious diction of the critic regarding the higher principles of poetry, *ars est celare artem*. This is the idea which Calvin so well expresses after he has given a masterly summary of its contents: "Verum nihil horum continua serie facit. Nam sparsim docendo et exhortando varius est." Bengel sought to find out in the epistle a strict and systematic arrangement, which he states to be the following: First, the Exordium (i. 1—4); Secondly, the Tractatio (i. 5—v. 12); and Thirdly, the Conclusion (v. 13—21). The great object of the epistle, according to Bengel, is to assert and establish the communion of the faithful with the triune God, through the mediation of Jesus Christ. Agreeably to this fundamental principle of the epistle, he divides the second part, or the Tractatio, into a special and a general part. The special part treats (1) *de communione cum Deo, in luce* (i. 5—10.); (2) *de communione cum Filio* (ii. 1—iii. 24); and (3) *de corroboratione et fructu mansionis illius per Spiritum* (iv. 1—21). The second part of the Tractatio corresponds with the first, and treats *de testimonio Patris et Filii et Spiritus*, &c. And, lastly, the Conclusion corresponds with the Exordium, recapitulating and re-asserting the fellowship of the redeemed church with the three-one God. This is the most elaborate attempt yet made to discover an artificial arrangement in the epistle. One feels, however, that it is *too* artificial, and consequently unlike the free, full action of the inspiring Spirit. It is not easy to make out from the epistle such a regular systematic discussion of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity as Bengel supposes. Bengel's Exordium, however (i. 1—4), and his Conclusion (v. 13—21), are natural, and have been noticed by most commentators. De Wette maintains that there is an arrangement observable in the epistle, but warns us against making it too exact and artificial. He divides it thus: First, the Introduction (i. 1—4); Secondly, three Exhortations, and these make up nearly the entire epistle. The first Exhortation (i. 5—ii. 28) proceeds from the principle that Christian fellowship includes light, purity from sin, keeping the commandments of God, and



love; the second Exhortation (ii. 29—iv. 6) rests on the great moral principle of Christianity, that communion with God has its basis in righteousness of conduct, and especially in love; and the third Exhortation (iv. 7—v. 21) proceeds also from the principle of love, which is indeed the very being of God, and is manifested to mankind in the sending of Jesus Christ. This is the body of the epistle. Then comes a reference to the certainty of this faith in the love of the Son of God (v. 1—13). Finally, the apostle concludes (v. 13—21) with the promise of confidence towards God, a reference to God as the hearer of prayer, and a warning against idolatry. Such is the division of De Wette. But surely, if Bengel erred in making the epistle a systematic treatise on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, De Wette has erred much more essentially in shutting out the doctrines of the gospel altogether. His “Three Exhortations” remind you much more of the pious effusions of a rationalistic moralist, like the author of the “Stunden der Andacht,” than the author of the fourth gospel writing in the power of the Holy Spirit for the benefit of the universal church. Lücke makes no formal division of the epistle, but, denying that it is a collection of aphorisms, he goes over its successive chapters, condensing and reproducing their various contents in a masterly manner, and drawing the conclusion that the theme of the whole epistle is “that as the ground and root of Christian fellowship is the fellowship of each with the Father and the Son in faith and in love, so this again has its necessary consequence and representation in the fellowship with the brethren. Dr. Friedr. Düsterdieck, the latest commentator who has written on the epistle (1852) divides it differently. After the Introduction (i. 1—4), he makes two principal divisions. The first reaches from i. 5—ii. 28, and the second from ii. 29—v. 5. The great substance or theme of the first is “God is Light” (i. 5), and that of the second, “God is righteous” (ii. 29); and from these flow, as streams from a fountain, all the various doctrines and duties, promises and threatenings, warnings and exhortations, of

the two divisions. Then we have a concluding Exhortation (v. 6—21), whose sum and substance may be expressed in the sentence, “Jesus is the Son of God.” It is remarkable with what tact and ingenuity this author reduces and subordinates the whole epistle to these three leading ideas—God is light—God is righteous—and, Jesus is the Son of God. On the whole, we would ask what advantage do we derive from this or any other formal systematic disposition of the contents of the epistle? It weakens, rather than strengthens, the impression which the reading of it is calculated to produce on the mind; and the attempt to subject such a free-loving spirit as that of the Apostle John to the rules of our intellect and logic is neither judicious nor scriptural. But leaving the order and arrangement for a moment, what are the *contents* of our epistle? Calvin says—“*Doctrinam exhortationibus mistam continet. Disserit enim de æterna Christi deitate, simul de incomparabili, quam mundo patefactus secum attulit, gratia; tum de omnibus in genere beneficiis, ac præsertim inæstimabilem divinæ adoptionis gratiam commendat atque extollit. Inde sumit exhortandi materiam; et nunc quidem in genere pie et sancte vivendum admonet, nunc de charitate nominatim præcipit.*” I prefer this simple statement to all the elaborate divisions of the more modern German commentators, and it contains the germ of the true principles by which we are to expound the writings of the Apostle John. The fountain from which the living waters of this epistle flow is not any doctrine or duty, however true or necessary, such as Lücke’s theme, “Communion with God and with one another;” but the living, life-giving person of the Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore, both in the gospel and the epistle, the apostle *begins* and *ends* with Him: He is the Word of God, the Logos or revealer of the eternal, invisible, unapproachable God; and in Him, as the incarnate Redeemer, all fulness of grace and goodness, of life and immortality, have been revealed to mankind. The person of the God-man is the starting-point from which the apostle proceeds in his manifold delineations of God and the



church ; the terminus or object to which he seeks to lead us ; and the central-point around which, according to John, all the systems of divine manifestation, in providence and grace, in time and eternity, shall for ever revolve. Here, even in the person of Emmanuel, we find the true unity of the epistle, the connecting line which unites all its various doctrines and duties into one harmonious whole ; and without recognising this all-pervading divine personality we can never arrive at the true exposition of the epistle. If God be light, He is so, and is seen to be so only, at least so far as we are concerned, in the gospel of Christ : if God be righteous, I ask where is his righteousness most conspicuously revealed ? Is it not in the life and the death, in the doing and dying of the Son of God ? If communion with the Father in Heaven and with the brethren on earth be a principal truth contained in the epistle, surely this fellowship is attainable only in the person of the Mediator, with whom, accordingly, our apostle begins and ends his epistle. If the glorious God, the Creator and Lord of the worlds, be delineated in the character of a compassionate father whose eternal mercy invites and entreats his prodigal children to return ; if He be indeed the God of love, and love itself, to whom no needy creature ever came or comes in vain, is it not of *ὁ Θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ*, “God in Christ,” even the Father of the only-begotten Son, that the apostle speaks ? Are not the Father and the Son so absolutely identified in the mind of the writer, that, in many cases, we cannot determine to which of them the pronouns refer ? (See iii. 2. v. 14, 20. iv. 19. iii. 19.) This is not owing to the imperfection of the apostle’s diction and grammatical knowledge, as some audacious critics have ventured to assert, but to the doctrine which he teaches, that the Father and the Son are one, and consequently, that, in the contemplation of the Christian mind, they are ever equally present. Radiating, then, from the central point, of the person of the God-man, our apostle expatiates over the privileges of the redeemed church here and her glories hereafter ; over the heinousness of sin and the loveliness of holiness ;

over the awful power of the enemy and the beneficent and benignant character of God. Burdened with the oppression of our sins, we are led to his atoning blood for cleansing (i. 7): if we, having come to the Saviour, have, notwithstanding, been led into transgression, He is presented to our acceptance as the Advocate with the Father, in whose intercession we have the sympathy of a brother (ii. 1).

“ Though now ascended up on high,  
He bends on earth a brother's eye :  
Partaker of the human name  
He knows the frailties of our frame.”

If we are required to keep his commandments (ii. 3), and abide in Him (ii. 6), and love the brethren (ii. 10), and overcome the wicked one (ii. 14), and resist the world (ii. 15), and reject the anti-Christian liar who denies both the Father and the Son (ii. 22), and to have confidence before the Judge in the day of God (ii. 28); in these, and in all other Christian duties and privileges, we are connected with the sustaining Head, Jesus Christ, by the *χρίσμα*, the unction from the Holy One, by which alone we are quickened, and enabled to do the will of God (ii. 20, 27); so that here, also, the person of Christ is the great unity in which all the delineations of the apostle are summed up and harmonized. In the same way you should read the third chapter, which, for richness, variety, and beauty, is surpassed by few in the whole word of God. Jesus is still the centre of the apostle's deep and manifold teachings. He is to come again as the hope of the church and the creation, and then we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (iii. 2). He has been manifested in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil (iii. 8); He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (iii. 16); and all the duties which we owe to God and to our brethren—all the hopes and privileges—all the holiness, perfection, and victory, which belong to the believer, are centered in the Son of God and flow forth from Him

alone. The three primitive confessions of faith—"Jesus is the Christ" (ii. 22), which we maintain against the Jews; "Jesus is come in the flesh" (iv. 2, 3), which we maintain against lying spirits and antichrist; and "Jesus is the Son of God" (v. 5), which we maintain against the deniers of his divinity; are but the various development of his manifold fulness: and if the whole spirit and substance of the fourth chapter may be summed up in the glorious assertion, "God is Love," we are not to forget what immediately follows, and which connects all this ocean-fulness of grace and love with the God-man. "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only-begotten son into the world, that we might live through Him" (iv. 9). Follow out this train of thought in the concluding chapter, and see how it completes and elucidates the unity of the whole composition. Regeneration arises from faith in Him (v. 1); the victory that overcometh the world is the living assurance that Jesus is the Son of God (v. 5); the three witnesses, heavenly and earthly, bear testimony to the gospel history of his work for man (v. 6—9); the record of God himself is "that eternal life is in his Son" (v. 12); the main object of the apostle's writing this epistle was, "That ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (v. 13). And as he began with asserting the deity of the Logos, so he concludes with asserting, "Jesus is the true God, and eternal life" (v. 20). Such is the brief analysis which we would present to you of the substance of this epistle. The order is not so much of chapters and sections, divisions and subdivisions, as that of plurality in unity, manifoldness and variety, rich and beautiful, proceeding in all directions from the person of the risen Christ, like many streams from one fountain of waters.

#### VIII. AGAINST WHOM DID JOHN WRITE.

The history of the various answers that have been given to this question would require a whole chapter, but, according to

the views we have expressed above concerning the epistle, this is neither necessary nor profitable. If it could be proved, which it never can be, that our epistle is a refutation of the errors and heresies of the Jews, or the Jewish teachers, or the Ebionites, or the Cerinthians, or the Docetæ, or the Gnostics in general, the reader, and the church in general, would be a loser, rather than a gainer, by the discovery, inasmuch as its applicability to the circumstances of the faithful in all ages and nations would be not a little impaired. Besides the polemical is far from being a conspicuous, much less the dominant principle of the composition; and those who see in it only the subtleties of theological controversy, can never enter into the lovely and loving spirit of the Apostle John. But though we learn little of the state of the ancient heretics from this epistle, we do learn a great deal, from the simple statement of truth, of the errors which then, and now, and always, hover round, and sometimes enter into, the fold of the Redeemer. The person of Christ was from the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, the grand object of attack to ungodly men and self-condemned heretics, even as it is the chief object of wonder, adoration, and delight to all believing and well-instructed minds. We will mention, then, a few of the errors opposed or anticipated in our epistle on this and other subjects. Jesus Christ, as to his higher nature, is, according to the Apostle John, the divine Logos, the Son of God, in a true, real, and natural sense, having the nature and attributes of the Father; He is the *ὁ Υἱὸς ὁ μονογενὴς*, “the only-begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth;” He is God, *Θεὸς* and *ὁ Θεὸς*; and He is *ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς*, “the true God, and eternal life” (1 John v. 20). Of course, then, the Apostle condemns all contrary errors, both in his own times and in after ages. Who-soever denies that Jesus is the Son of God, or the only-begotten Son of God, or that He is the true God and eternal life, must be condemned in our epistle. Then, again, the blessed Redeemer is, according to the apostle, really and truly *man*, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, so that He shed his



*blood* (τὸ αἷμα, i. 7) for our sins, and is manifested in our *flesh* (ἐν σαρκί, iv. 2), as the true Messiah, Saviour, and Redeemer of the world. He, therefore, who denies his real human nature, that He is the descendant of Abraham, the seed of the woman, the son of the Virgin Mary, is opposed and rebuked in our epistle. If you maintain that our fallen nature is so sunken in sin and interpenetrated with darkness, that it is abandoned of God as lost and unredeemable; or, on the other hand, that sin is a mere accident in creation, not requiring expiation; or that God is too glorious and remote from our world to notice our transgressions; or that He is in his own nature indifferent to the actions of mankind; or that the *flesh* (σὰρξ) is utterly incapable of communion with God, and could never have been created, assumed, and redeemed by the holy and true God; then know, that all these errors and vain speculations are here rebuked and condemned (i. 6. ii. 2. iv. 3). The immeasurable distance between God and the human race is not filled up by a system of Eons, nor is there an imperfect, mixed system of worlds, forming a secondary and inferior universe, with which the Father of Lights has nothing to do, but created and governed by a Demiurge in the boundless pleroma; for the worlds of the created universe were created by the Logos or Son of God, who is the φῶς, the ζωὴ, and the ἀλήθεια, “the Light, the Life, and the Truth,” and in Him is the true pleroma or fulness of God (John i. 3, 16, 7. xiv. 6. 1 John i. 1, 2). All the theories of the wise and the speculations of the intellectual, as far as there is any germ of truth in them, are consolidated and harmonized in the person and work of the Redeemer. “En Jésus Christ toutes les contradictions sont accordées.” Our epistle, then, may have been occasioned by the errors which were beginning to make head in the apostolic age, but it strikes equally the spirit of error in all ages. It condemns the walk in the flesh, the lusts of the world, the want of true charity, the departure from the communion of Christ, the yielding to the temptations and dominion of the wicked one, as much now as in the apostolic age.



## IX. EXPLANATIONS.

I have used freely every commentary that I could find in the English, German, Greek, and Latin languages in my exposition of this epistle. Those who think the writings of John easy, and especially this epistle, will speedily alter their sentiment when they begin seriously to expound it. There is, indeed, a general superficial meaning which may be easily gathered from it, for it abounds in noble, beautiful sentiments, very often expressed in a general way, which afford nourishment to the simplest believing minds; but to trace the connection of the sentences, and arrive at the deep, often hidden, currents of thought which were in the mind of the apostle, is a difficult problem. The very first sentence is designated by Calvin, “*abrupta et confusa oratio*;” and Erasmus names three wise men to construe the sentence. The Germans have contributed much to the exposition, both by their immense historical investigations and their rigid principles of criticism. Yet we do not hesitate to affirm that most of the great German critics, at least of the more modern schools, were utterly unqualified to understand or expound the writings of the Apostle John. Only think of semi-deists or rationalists, like Gesenius, Ewald, or De Wette, setting to work with their critical apparatus to explain the First Epistle of John! Lücke is impartial, and learned, and *critically* in earnest; yet the attentive reader soon discovers a very decided anti-evangelical tendency in his celebrated commentary: I say anti-evangelical in *our* sense of the word, for in Germany he has done much to overthrow the cold kingdom of rationalism and unbelief. How far I have succeeded in this work, others must judge; and it is quite possible that I have been, in many cases, mistaken, nor can any one do me a better service than to point out my errors. There are about twenty or thirty names in the literary world who have gained a conspicuous place in the theological circles; and in German commentaries these are perpetually introduced. In some of

them the bulk of the work is made up of these authoritative names, and quotations from their works. This gives their writings the appearance of prodigious learning and research. Every page is bristling with hard words and strange languages, and the eye of the common reader is terrified at the very appearance, as the peaceful citizen is at the pointed cannon of a fortress. I have avoided this as much as possible, and in all quotations from foreign languages I have given the translation. And now, O thou God of grace and love, forgive all my ignorance, errors, and prejudices in this work, which I undertook in thy name and for thy glory ; forgive what is mine and bless what is thine own ; and let the work be useful to many souls in this day of much darkness and evil. Amen, Amen.

# THE SPIRIT OF LOVE.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF ST. JOHN.

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### CHAPTER I.

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Ὁ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ὁ ἀκηκόα-  
μεν, ὁ ἐώρακαμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλ-  
μοῖς ἡμῶν, ὁ ἐθεασάμεθα, καὶ αἱ  
χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν περὶ  
τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς·

(Καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη· καὶ  
ἐώρακαμεν, καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν, καὶ  
ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν τὴν ζωὴν τὴν  
αἰώνιον, ἣτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πα-  
τέρα, καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν·)

\*Ὁ ἐώρακαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόα-  
μεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ἵνα  
καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ' ἡ-  
μῶν· καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα  
μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ  
Υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

C

THAT which was from the  
beginning, which we have heard,  
which we have seen with our  
eyes, which we have looked upon,  
and our hands have handled, of  
the Word of life.

(For the life was manifested,  
and we have seen *it*, and bear  
witness, and shew unto you that  
eternal life, which was with the  
Father, and was manifested  
unto us;)

That which we have seen and  
heard declare we unto you, that  
ye also may have fellowship with  
us : and truly our fellowship  
*is* with the Father, and with his  
Son Jesus Christ.

Καὶ ταῦτα γράφομεν ὑμῖν,      And these things write we  
 ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ὑμῶν ᾗ πεπληρω-      unto you, that your joy may be  
 μένη.      full.

## CONTENTS.

- A.* Ὁ λόγος τῆς ζωῆς, JESUS "THE WORD OF LIFE." I. THE ORIGIN OF THE NAME. II. DOES THE LOGOS DENOTE A PERSON OR NOT? III. THE CERTAINTY OF THE TRUTH OF CHRIST'S PERSON. IV. THE PHRASE ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, "FROM THE BEGINNING," ἡ ζωὴ, JESUS "THE LIFE."
- B.* I. THE NAME ζωὴ. II. THE SIGNS OF LIFE. III. VARIOUS SIGNIFICATIONS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT. IV. THE MANIFESTATION OF THE ζωὴ: 1. THE FACT; 2. THE MODE; 3. THE PURPOSE; 4. THE TIME. V. THE PERSONALITY. VI. THE CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH AND THE OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY.
- C.* Ἡ κοινωνία, THE BELIEVER'S "FELLOWSHIP." I. THE LOSS OF THIS FELLOWSHIP CONSIDERED. II. FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER. III. FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.
- D.* Χαρὰ, THE BELIEVER'S "JOY" DESCRIBED.

JOHN is distinguished among the apostles by the Spirit of Love which pervades his writings. He seems to dwell in the sanctuary of divine love, and to speak to us from the bosom of Him who freely gave up his Son to the death for us all. He brings us into contact with the fountain of mercy, and makes us feel, as we read, how awful, how overpowering, how sin-consuming, is the presence of divine love. Simplicity is wonderfully blended with sublimity in his writings; and the soul, drinking in as a child the milk of his words, feels herself borne aloft far above the clouds and storms which distract our world, into the region of peace, and blessedness, and joy. A serene heaven shines above you, where a thousand stars beckon you to

the land of rest, and the air which you breathe is from the kingdom of peace. If heaven be love, we have here a foretaste of it; and if the spirit of love dwells anywhere on earth, it is in these pages of the beloved apostle. He leaned on the bosom of Christ, and thus knew where the fountain of mercy and love was to be found. He has none of the flights of superhuman eloquence and beauty which distinguish Paul, but he unveils the ocean of God's love to man, full and free to the most wretched, without bottom and without bounds, without a cloud to obscure or a storm to agitate its peaceful waters. Let us imbibe his spirit as we read and expound this epistle; and may the God of all grace give us his enriching blessing!

A. 'Ο λόγος τῆς ζωῆς, JESUS "THE WORD OF LIFE."

The controversies which the perverted ingenuity of speculative and unbelieving minds have originated concerning the Logos are nearly endless, and we have not the least intention either to repeat or to answer them. We shall give what we believe to be the truth according to the word of God on this important subject, without reference to errors and speculations.

I. *The origin of the Name* must be traced, no doubt, to the great fact, that by the fall of man the true knowledge of God has become greatly obscured, if not totally extinguished among the nations. His ways are dark and mysterious: clouds and darkness surround his throne, and the trembling, agitated conscience is perplexed with a thousand fears and suspicions. We therefore long for some certain convictions as to the nature of the unseen God, and our probable relations towards Him; some voice from the inner sanctuary to quiet our fears, and shed over our pilgrimage the radiance of hope. God has been graciously pleased to gratify this aspiration of the fallen race, and from the beginning there has shone over us the promise of a deliverer. This deliverer was to open up to us the mysteries of the unseen world, and reconcile the fallen world to the Creator; and hence



one of his most appropriate names is the *Word*, the *Revealer*, whose voice is the voice of God, and whose person is the image of God ; so that to see Him is to see the Father (John xiv. 9). “Logos,” the same as **לֹגוֹס**, has various significations, which find their application and fulfilment in Christ. It signifies the *word spoken* (Matt. viii. 8. 1 Cor. xiv. 9. Heb. xii. 19, &c.), by which the mind and intention are made known to others ; and so Jesus Christ is the great revealer and manifester of the invisible God : it signifies the *divine promises* (Heb. iv. 2. Rom. ix. 6, &c.) ; and so in Jesus all the promises are Yea and Amen, manifested, established, and sealed for evermore : it means very frequently, in the New Testament, the *Gospel* (John xvii. 6. Luke v. 1. Acts iv. 29, 30. x. 44. 2 Tim. iv. 2, &c.) ; and so Jesus the divine Saviour is the sum and substance of the gospel. He is our salvation, and without Him all our rites and ceremonies are unavailing. “Wer Christum hat, der hat Alles ; und wer Christum nicht hat, der hat gar Nichts”—“He that has Christ, has all ; and he that has all, and yet has not Christ, has nothing”). Thus we might search for all the various significations of “Logos” and find them all harmonized and confirmed in Christ. This, therefore, is the origin of the name, and the reason of its being applied to Christ. His name is called the Word of God, because He is the image and revealer of God ; and all that which “Logos” signifies in the Bible or among men is summed up and confirmed in Him.

II. Does the “Logos” in our text denote the *person* of Christ or the *gospel* of Christ ? It may denote both, and the apostle may refer some of his assertions to the one subject, and some of them to the other, as Paul evidently does (Heb. iv. 12, 13), when, in the same passage, he passes from *word spoken*, to the personal *Logos* or high-priest passed into the heavens. The Socinians, indeed, wish to understand our text only of the *doctrine* of Christ ; but this is quite contrary to the scope of the passage and the literal meaning of the words. For, first, the words, “to see,

to *look* upon, and to *handle*," can only with great difficulty and straining be applied to the doctrines of the gospel. Secondly, The apostle seems plainly to begin both his gospel and epistle in the same way, and to use the word "Logos" in the same sense in both. In the gospel, however, there is no doubt that the "Logos" refers to the divine nature of Christ, for it is called Θεός, and was with God," ἐν ἀρχῇ, "in the beginning;" and σὰρξ ἐγένετο, was made flesh for the salvation of the world (John i. 1—14); and hence it is natural to conclude that the "Logos" has the same meaning in our text. The two passages are, indeed, remarkably similar. Jesus is in both ὁ Λόγος, "the Word;" in both He is ἡ ζωὴ, "the Life;" in both He is πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, "with God;" in both, though in different ways, He is connected with ἀρχῇ, "the beginning;" in both he is the object of the senses; and in both He is manifested for the salvation of his people. The "Logos," therefore, of our text is no other than the divine Redeemer, the revealer of Jehovah, the express image of his person, χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (Heb. i. 3), in whom we see the ways and the will of the Father fully declared.

III. *The certainty of the truth of the person of Christ.* This the apostle asserts in the fullest and strongest manner, both here and in all his writings. Jesus was no ideal, but a real personal Saviour: his nature, his manner, and all his actions, shew this. The times, the places, and the circumstances, are, in most instances, fully given. He was born, lived, and died among us, and in the midst of circumstances which could not but arouse the keenest attention both of friends and enemies. Nevertheless, some speculative minds, trained up in the feeling that matter was essentially sinful, asserted that Jesus had not a human, but a celestial body. John contradicts these vain speculations, and insists that the human nature of Jesus was real, corporeal, mortal, and in all respects like ours, with the single exception of sin. Ἀκηκόαμεν, "we have heard Him;" he spake

as never man spake, and his words were words of love, comfort, and peace: we heard Him in private with his disciples and in families; we heard his public discourses to the Jews in the temple, and on the mountains, and by the Sea of Galilee; we heard Him in the solemnities of prayer, in delivering his parables, in healing the sick, and in all his intercourse with mankind. In this we can never be deceived. *Ἐωράκαμεν*, “we have seen” the Word of Life, the Living Word, the incarnate God; our eyes gazed on the marred face and form of the Man of Sorrows, and, while rejected by the sinful world, his form, his face, his words of love had for us, and for all the loving and lowly ones, an attractive and transforming power. We saw Him in his relations to the twelve whom He had chosen; we saw Him in his private intercourse with the people; we saw Him as the prophet and public minister of God in the midst of friends and foes; we saw the stable where He was born, the city where He dwelt, the miracles which He did, and the cruel, agonizing death which He died. *Ἐθεασάμεθα*, “we have narrowly inspected him” (Tittmann de Synonym. in N. Test.; Blackwall Sacr. Class., as quoted by Doddridge; see also Lücke’s Commentary). *Œcumenius*, indeed, asserts (Lücke) *θεᾶσθαι ἐστὶ τὸ μετὰ θαύματος καὶ θάμβους ὁρᾶν*; but this does not seem to lie in the words, nor is there any passage in the New Testament where *θεᾶσθαι* includes the idea of *admiration* as distinguished from *ὁρᾶν*. That the former is more in this passage than the latter is manifest from the nature of the sentence, which rises gradually higher and higher to the climax of absolute and irresistible certainty. *Καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν*, “and our hands have handled of the Word of life.” We have looked upon Him, and narrowly inspected his character and his works, and there can be no doubt whatever that He was, what He seemed to be, a true and perfect, yet sinless man. We had every means to be assured of this, for we handled Him, lay on his bosom, touched his feet and his side (Luke xxiv. 39. John xiii. 22). He, too, washed the disciples’ feet; took Peter by the hand when sinking; touched the leper whom He healed;

and in every way, and on all occasions, shewed that his body was a real human body, bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, weak and frail, visible, tangible, and mortal as our own; so that He was in all respects like his brethren, with the exception of sin (Heb. iv. 15, 16). This is a great point of doctrine with John and Paul, and all the apostles, inasmuch as it identifies the glorious God-man with the weakness and wants, the temptations and trials, the misery, wretchedness, and destitution of our fallen mortal estate. His body was not a new creation, as Clark falsely asserts, but a new generation by the power of the Holy Ghost; so that he was really the seed of the woman, the son of the Virgin Mary, the lineal descendant and heir of David the king, the kinsman Redeemer, one of the race whom it pleased him to redeem, the second Adam, or new-covenant Head, in whom, and from whom, and through whom, the church, and the human race, and the whole creation, should be headed up and blessed for ever. The humanity of Christ is as great a doctrine of the New Testament as his godhead, and much more frequently taught. This is natural. It is his manhood that connects Him with *us*, and gives to his frail and suffering members the hope of being with Him and like Him in his glory. Not in the glories of his illimitable godhead, by which he created and sustains all things; not in the bosom of the Father Almighty, where he dwelt from eternity; not in the high and imperial state that surrounded his throne in the temple of the universe (Isaiah vi. 1—4; compare John xii. 41), do we see the love, and compassion, and all-attracting goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ: no, no, not there; but in the stable where he was born in our nature, and in Golgotha, where he bore the burden of our transgressions; in the grave which he consecrated and opened for all men; and in the ascension which glorified humanity, do we trace the manifestations of his love. It is not his majesty, but his majesty *abased* which exalts and glorifies us; it is not God, but *God manifest in the flesh*, in whom we see the fountains of divine love broken open for a thirsty world; it is not the



Saviour's supreme and incomprehensible form of being (*ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ*, Phil. ii. 6), as a person in the eternal and adorable god-head, but his servant-form (*μορφῇ δούλου*, Phil. ii. 7) as the human Brother and kinsman Redeemer, to which the heart of his people turns in the hour when terror and temptations thicken around. Hence Paul's great theme was Jesus Christ the *crucified*; and so it must ever be to the end of the world, where there are faithful preachers and earnest Christian hearers.

IV. The "Logos" is here said to be *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*, "from the beginning;" and as there is no limiting word in the passage, we should, according to all the rules of right interpretation, take it in its absolute sense. Whitby and others take *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* to mean "from the beginning of the gospel dispensation," because the same phrase occurs in that sense, they say, 1 John ii. 7, 24. iii. 11. 2 John ver. 6. Luke i. 2. John xv. 27. Now if you examine these passages accurately, you will find they are all essentially different from our text in many respects, and therefore cannot rule the interpretation of it. First, All these are limited and connected with certain expressions that determine the meaning of the phrase "from the beginning," and give it a relative sense. Thus, "ye have heard a commandment from the beginning" (1 John ii. 7) is very different from our text, and can mean only from the beginning of the gospel dispensation. The phrase, "that which ye have heard from the beginning" (1 John ii. 24) is very different from the expression, "ye have heard, seen, and handled Him who was from the beginning." In the first case the phrase "from the beginning" cannot mean from eternity, from the beginning of time; while in the latter case it *may*, and such is its most *natural* meaning. Secondly, I believe the "from the beginning" in our text is substantially the same as the "in the beginning" (John i. 1, and Gen. i. 1). In all these cases the being spoken of is absolute and eternal, and it is natural that the words "in the beginning" and "from the beginning" should be taken absolutely. This is



the simple, natural meaning, and, without necessary cause, we should not depart from it. Thirdly, Is it possible to believe that the apostle would begin one of the noblest, richest epistles in the world with the trivial statement that Jesus Christ existed from the beginning of the gospel dispensation, or that the doctrine of Christ existed from the beginning of Christ's public ministry? Is it not much more likely that the apostle, whose mind was filled with the glories of the eternal Logos, should begin both gospel and epistle by asserting the eternal existence of the Redeemer who was manifested in these last times to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself? In this sense the opening of the epistle is sublime, and in perfect keeping with the prominence and importance which the apostle John gives to the person and work of Christ. Fourthly, Besides, according to the views which we are combating, the  $\acute{o} \tilde{\eta}\nu$  is perfectly superfluous; for the apostle merely intended to say, "from the beginning we have heard, we have seen, and we have handled, the Word of life." Now if this be all that the apostle intended to say, I repeat it, the first two words are unnecessary. This, however, is absolutely impossible, both because the apostle was inspired, and because the  $\acute{o} \tilde{\eta}\nu$  is emphatic. For these reasons, therefore, I believe that the  $\acute{\alpha}\pi' \acute{\alpha}\rho\chi\tilde{\eta}\varsigma$  refers indefinitely to the past eternity, and is to be taken absolutely.

#### B. $\tilde{\eta} \omega\tilde{\eta}$ , JESUS "THE LIFE."

The Lord Jesus is, in the scriptures of truth, delineated as the source and fountain of every thing noble, and good, and blessed in the creation. From Him all gifts proceed, and to Him they all return in the thankful acknowledgment of his creatures. But all his names, offices, and attributes as Mediator have a bearing upon his relations to the church, the creation, and the Creator, between whom He sustains the function of Intercessor and Mediator. Some of his names have a more direct reference to us, and others to his relations to God. To the weary, tempest-tossed church, drifted about by manifold storms and temp-

tations, he is the *Rock*, the resting-place for our feet, the hiding-place in the hour of danger, and the fountain as in the days of old from which the healing water flows ;

“ Rock of ages cleft for me,  
 Let me hide myself in thee !  
 Let the water and the blood  
 From thy riven side which flowed  
 Be of sin the double cure,  
 Cleanse me from its guilt and power !”

to the alienated and exiled soul he gives the promise of a home above ; to the longing spirit seeking after the knowledge of God He presents himself as the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life* ; every thing strong, and beautiful, and holy, must testify of Him ; He is the way for our feet, the staff for our hand, the righteousness to cover our nakedness, the hope and the comforter of all that are weary and heavy-laden ; he is the Lamb to bear away our sins on the cross, the Lion of the tribe of Judah to conquer all his and our enemies, the Star of Bethlehem to guide us in the night, the Sun in his meridian splendour, and the Light in the circumambient air. We meet Him everywhere, and hear His voice of love in all the events of nature and providence. But let us contemplate the name of Jesus in our text.

I. He is called *the Life*, and all life centres in Him, or flows forth from Him (John i. 4. v. 26. xi. 26. xiv. 6. Col. iii. 4. John v. 39. -xii. 50. xvii. 3). He is called *Life*, and He contains the fountains of eternal life, because we are weak, needy, sinful, dying creatures. Death, entering the world through sin, fastens upon every thing, consuming our beauty like the moth, and preying upon all we hold dearest ; nor can any redeem his own soul, or deliver his darling from the hand of the destroyer. Wide, solitary, and dismal is this kingdom of death, and we should look with extacy to any one that can give us the hope of breaking his dominion. This glorious hope is unfolded to

us in the name and character of the Redeemer. *He is the Life* : He has wrestled with the king of terrors, and overthrown him ; He drank the bitter cup of more than mortal anguish on the cross for our sakes, and from the tomb and from Hades, on the morning of the third day, He arose victorious over the powers of death and hell.

“ He that was buried has burst from the grave,  
From death reassuming the life that He gave,  
Is risen in glory, almighty to save.”

“ Jesus lebt, mit ihm auch ich,  
Tod, wo sind nun deine Schrecken ?  
Er, er lebt, und wird auch mich  
Von den Todten auferwecken.  
Er verklärt mich in sein Licht,  
Dies ist meine Zuversicht.”

In Him the eternal life of God intended for the redeemed creation stands concentrated, and in proportion as we love, resemble, and approach Him, do we *live* ; all out of Him is death, and to be shut out from his presence finally, is eternal death. The world, with all its pomp and its glory, in so far as it rejects Jesus Christ and his gospel, is nothing but a whited sepulchre, beautiful indeed to the eye, but full of rottenness and dead men's bones : all its splendour and brightness are but the tinsel and embroidery of death ! In Jesus alone is life and peace, and through Him alone can the soul find an entrance into the kingdom of eternal life.

“ Vita mortem superat ;  
Homo jam recuperat,  
Quod prius amiserat,  
Paradisi gaudium ;

Viam præbet facilem,  
Cherubim versatilem,  
Ut Deus promiserat,  
Amovendo gladium.”

II. The *Signs* of life are something like the following :—

1st. *Motion*. Where there is life there is motion, and one of the first effects of the presence of Jesus is to draw the soul to himself. Without Him we remain in the stillness of death: there is no motion towards God or divine things. The life shed abroad in our hearts by the risen one first directs the movements of the soul towards God.

2dly. *Sensation* is a sign of life. The dead are past feeling; and, in a spiritual sense, the soul without Christ is like the hardened Jews described by the apostle as twice dead, plucked up by the roots (Jude 12); and “being past feeling” is the fearful description of the corrupt gentile nations (Rom. iv. 19). It is Jesus who gives us a tender, feeling, loving heart, that can feel for the wants and the woes of others.

3dly. The living have *enjoyment*; and however wretched we may be, death is still a privation. Jesus is the source of all our real joys, and whatever unmixed enjoyment we have upon the earth comes only from Him. He communicates his own joy, and intends that all his disciples should have full and perfect joy in Him (John xv. 2. xvi. 24. xviii. 3. 1 John i. 4). What, then, must be the enjoyments of his heavenly kingdom, where death is unknown, and life, in its most glorious and immortal forms, flourishes without decay or corruption?

4thly. In every living being there is a certain *healing* power which distinguishes it from the dead. In death there is only a constant and accelerating process of corruption until all is dissolved. Sin, left to itself, tends only more and more to the consummation of eternal death. It has, like death, its offspring, no self-restoring power, but must, by its very nature, proceed with accelerating velocity to its fearful termination. The new life in the soul, on the contrary, like all life, contains a healing, self-restoring principle, by which, though often wounded, tempted, and brought to the brink of death, the believer is always brought back to the ways of righteousness, and made finally conqueror through the blood of the Lamb.



5thly. Another characteristic of life is its *enlarging power*. Every living creature *grows* and enlarges its dimensions till it has attained the perfection of its nature, and in this sense, too, Jesus is our life. He implants the desires which eternity only can satisfy, and which enlarge in dimension and fervour by every fresh manifestation of his glory. The seed of life sown in the heart, buds, germinates, and continues to grow till it flourishes in the perfection of its nature in the kingdom of heaven. The seed of promise, planted in Eden when other fruits began to wither, took root there, and continued to grow and expand till the Deliverer came, the seed of the woman, the serpent-bruiser; and in our days the green circle of life is extending its borders wonderfully along the barren territory of heathenism, and we may rest assured that it will go forth expanding and widening till the glorious purpose of God in the salvation of mankind be completed. The believer is exhorted to *grow* in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; and we may fairly measure the life of the church in general, or any particular church, by the efforts which she makes to disseminate among the nations the seeds of eternal life. These are the general signs or symptoms of life; and if Jesus, our life, be among us, they are sure to accompany Him.

III. The word ζωή, or “life,” has various *significations* in the Scripture, of which the three principal are the following:—

1st. It denotes *physical* existence, or our natural life. (Luke xvi. 25. Acts xvii. 25. 1 Cor. iii. 22. xv. 19). And in this sense Jesus is the Life in the most absolute sense of the word, for He is the Creator of all that is created, the boundless fountain of universal being. (Col. i. 16. John i. 3.)

2dly. Life signifies a *holy* existence in opposition to the state of death and corruption into which we have been brought by the fall. (Rom. vi. 4. Eph. iv. 18. 2 Pet. i. 3.) Satan brought us into the region of death, and the gospel of Christ is intended to remove the degradation and dishonour of our transgression

by restoring us to the life of holiness, righteousness, and peace.

3dly. ζωή, like יְיָ among the Hebrews, means *happiness, joy, the future blessedness of the righteous, eternal glory*; and hence the following expressions, which are indeed so simple and natural that they need little explanation: ζωή αἰώνιος (Matt. xix. 16, 17. John iii. 15, 16) is the *eternal life* of glory which the Redeemer and the redeemed shall spend together after the resurrection of the dead; the ἡ ζωὴ ἡ μελλούσα (1 Tim. iv. 8) is the *life to come*, which we shall enter into when He who is our life shall come in his own and his Father's glory (Col. iii. 1—5); τὰ ῥήματα τῆς ζωῆς ταύτης (Acts v. 20) designate the office of the preacher as a proclamation of the words of *this life*; ἐν ζωῇ βασιλεύειν (Rom. v. 17, 18. vi. 10. viii. 2, 6, 10. Phil. ii. 16. 2 Tim. i. 1. 1 John v. 12, 13, &c.), *to reign in life* with Jesus Christ, is one of the highest descriptions of the final blessedness of the righteous; ὁ στέφανος τῆς ζωῆς (James i. 12. Rev. ii. 10), the *crown of life*, is the eternal reward promised to the faithful, in which the royal dignity and unfading verdure are united together; the χάρις τῆς ζωῆς (1 Pet. iii. 7) is the grace which procures and leads to eternal life above. In all these expressions life is synonymous with the happiness and glory of the redeemed in heaven. Here, too, Jesus is the believer's *life*, as the source and well-spring of all his joys. If beholding the cross can fill us with such peaceful and abiding joy, what shall we experience when we behold the King in his glory surrounded with his redeemed people in the many mansions of the heavenly Father's house!

“Come, O thou universal Good!

Balm of the wounded conscience, come!

The hungry, dying spirit's food,

The weary, wandering pilgrim's home,

Haven to take the shipwreck'd in,

My everlasting rest from sin.

IV. But the apostle says the Life was *manifested*, “and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal

Life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." The next point here which claims our attention is the *manifestation* of this Life, which is nothing else but the *incarnation* of Christ. (1 John iii. 5. Rev. xvi. 26. 1 Tim. iii. 16). On this great and wondrous theme we shall limit ourselves to the following brief observations:—

1st. It is a great *fact*, yea, the great *fact of facts*, that this Life from the eternal God has been manifested to the children of men. God was manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. iii. 16). He who was in the form of God took upon Him the form of a servant, that for our sakes He might become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil. ii. 6—9). This stupendous act of divine condescension is the basis of the whole Christian system, and without it the temple of our faith would crumble to pieces. It is the act of Jehovah which unites the creature with himself, and prepares the way for all future manifestations of his grace and his glory. Considered as a *fact*, occurring on this earth, it is well calculated to excite to the highest all the feelings of love, wonder, admiration, and praise. And oh, how it enhances our guilt if we neglect such near approaches of our God! Oh what light this great fact throws on *sin* and *righteousness*, and the holy character of God! Verily, dear brother, God *is* love, and his tender mercies are over all his works.

2dly. The *mode* in which this *Life* was manifested enhances its value, and surrounds the character of God and the Redeemer with all the attributes of mercy and compassion which can attract the attention or overcome the obstinacy of the human race. We are conscious of transgression, and naturally tremble before the presence of almighty power, as Moses and Israel did before the thunders of Sinai; and surely it was to still all our apprehensions, and quiet our guilty fears and suspicions, that this Life has been manifested in our own nature. From *human* lips proceed the utterances of divine and eternal compassion; into human ears, even when addressing the Deity, we pour out our supplications and prayers; with *human* eyes the supreme and all-

seeing Jehovah contemplates the ruin and wretchedness into which sin hath brought our species; a human heart beats in the bosom of the great High Priest in the heavens; and in the entire dispensation of the incarnate Redeemer the ineffable majesty and glory of the godhead are softened and tempered by tenderness and love. This Life has reached us in all our various departments, and flowed into the sunk and decaying frame of humanity with a quickening and renovating power. Jesus is our Life. He was born among us, He lived and died among us, and his departure for a time is with the promise that He shall come again and set up among us his everlasting abode. (Rev. xxi. 3.) Through Him we have life; through Him whom we love, and who loved us unto death, even the death of the cross. Thus the gospel message is not merely the proclamation of life to the dying sinner, but life *through Jesus Christ*. God has shewn his wisdom, not only in the great fact of life and salvation being offered to the world, but also in the *way* in which they are offered.

3dly. The *purpose* for which this Life was manifested is the salvation of a fallen race, and the plan, the means, and the end, are in every way worthy of the divine wisdom and power. When we think of the depth to which sin has sunk us, the fearful power which the author of sin had usurped over us, the havoc which death, the king of terrors, has been making in his wide dominion for so many ages, the hopelessness of life and deliverance by creature interference, the number and value of the individual persons concerned, the probable progress of apostacy in other departments of the creation should sin remain unpunished here;—when we think on the misery in time and eternity from which they are all delivered, on the future and eternal weight of glory which is reserved in heaven for them, on the triumph which redeeming love has won over the powers of darkness, on the universal headship of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, on the future glory and stability of the universe;—when we think of these, and, above all, of the moral



glory and attractiveness which the incarnation and cross of Christ threw over the character of God, surely we must say the *purpose* is great, and in every way worthy of the universal Father.

4thly. The *time* when this Life was manifested shews also the wisdom of God. One great monarchy occupied and nearly filled the earth; peace reigned universally when the King and the kingdom of righteousness and peace were ushered into the world; all systems hitherto tried had failed, and one mighty and universal hope of a coming deliverer filled the mind both of Jews and Gentiles. Judaism had become a lifeless sort of whited sepulchre, without any thing noble or godlike remaining, save ancient names and a stately ceremonial; the philosophy of Greece had wrought no deliverance in the earth, and that subtle nation, the most civilized and cultivated on the earth, was no less corrupt as to moral character than their barbarous neighbours; the iron power of Rome was now at its height, and we learn, from the literature and monuments of that great people, how widely and deeply the gangrene of moral corruption had spread among them. There was needed a new life for the nations, and it was given; there was needed a heavenly teacher, a controlling authority, and it was given; there was needed a new example of peerless condescension and love, and in Jesus Christ it was given. "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

V. "This Life," says the apostle, "was *πρὸς τὸν Πατέρα*, *with the Father*." The *personality* of the Son and of the Spirit of God is as great and necessary a doctrine of the New Testament, as their various offices in the work of redemption. This Life was not in the Father, nor is it anywhere said this eternal Life is the same as the Father, but it is asserted to have been *with* the Father. So John, in the beginning of his gospel, asserts, in the same verse, that the word was *Θεὸς*, and *πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν*; reducing you

to the absolute necessity (if his authority hath weight with you) of believing either that there are more gods than one, or that there are more than one person in the divine nature. There is, indeed, a pantheistic tendency in some minds, which seeks to confound not only the divine persons with one another, but God himself with the creation. Nothing can be more unscriptural. Every page of the sacred books breathes and burns with the fervour of a living, acting, personal God. He is indeed the great worker among the nations: the creation is his work, the temple of his worship, and the monument of his power. He sends his Son from heaven to redeem the world; who, when the redemption on Golgotha is completed, returns to his Father, and the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, takes his place to abide with us for ever. We feel in all these delineations the presence of a personal God. Jesus Christ is a divine person. He was with the Father, and had fellowship with Him (*παρὰ σοί*, John xvii. 5), before the foundation of the world: his coming in the flesh was personal, his coming in glory is personal, his work was personal on earth, and his present work in heaven is personal.

VI. The *office* of the believing church, according to this second verse, is nothing else than to bear witness for Christ. The church is not appointed to perform ceremonies; to hold worldly festivals with splendour and pomp; to lead popular processions through the streets, with flags, standards, and military music, &c.; but to "Bear witness and shew forth that eternal Life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." (John xxi. 24. Acts ii. 32). The ministers of the New Testament are not priests, and they do not minister before an altar, nor are they appointed like the Jewish priesthood to offer up sacrifice. Their office is to teach the nations and bear witness for Jesus Christ their master. It is manifest, therefore, that Christianity, not being a system of sacraments but the ministry of the Holy Ghost, morality can never be separated from the person either of the worshipper

or the minister ; whereas in the papacy and in heathenism the religion of the people and the service of the priesthood may be altogether separated from morality of conduct and holiness of life. A wicked man may say mass very well, or shake incense over the people, or hold flags at a procession ; but to bear witness for Christ requires the new name, the new heart, and the new nature. In our lives, therefore, in our families, in the church of God, and in the world, we are called upon to testify to the doctrines of eternal life by the meekness of a quiet, holy deportment, by the fruits of the Holy Spirit, by words spoken in proper time and place, by holy discourse and heavenly prayers, by the whole bent of our thoughts, by the whole course of our lives, by patience in suffering for his name's sake ; in one word, by our whole life and conversation we are appointed and ordained of God to be the message-bearers and witnesses of his love. Be this your aim, ye preachers of the gospel, ye heralds of the cross ! Go forth, go forth, among the people, and proclaim to every creature the tale of God's love to the unloving, the message of his mercy to the unthankful and the unkind ! Bear witness for the Lord Jesus, and let the story of his love be told into the ear of every doubting, trembling, guilty sinner, on the face of the whole earth.

“ Waft, waft, ye winds, his story,  
 And you, ye waters, roll,  
 Till, like a sea of glory,  
 It spread from pole to pole  
 Till o'er our ransomed nature  
 The Lamb for sinners slain,  
 Redeemer, King, Creator,  
 In bliss returns to reign.”

C. *Ἡ κοινωνία*, “ THE BELIEVER'S FELLOWSHIP.”

The third verse is a continuation of the first, the whole of the second being explanatory and parenthetical, and the general subject which the apostle brings before us is the communion of saints.

I. This communion was broken by the *fall*, and could only be restored by the redemption of the fallen and the removal of the curse. Sin had separated between us and our God; the curse of Babel divided us into different languages, which make communication with one another a tedious and difficult process; the effects of climate, locality, civil and social institutions, with many other causes, have divided us into *races* of different colours and capacities, which makes the separation more marked and enduring. Out of all these circumstances, and the triumph of brute force in the first stages of society, have arisen *nations*, which again are separated from one another by customs, language, literature, and laws; by jealousy and manifold suspicions, as well as by long and bloody wars. Such is, without doubt, the state of mankind, and such must it for ever have remained, had not a new principle of union and life been infused into it. Here, now, commences the development of the mighty plan of divine love, purposed in the Christ from the beginning. Among the nations, and out of the broken and scattered fragments of fallen humanity, it is the work and purpose of Jesus the Redeemer to found and perpetuate for ever a new corporation, the *Church*, from all languages, kindreds, and peoples, in which all the elements of division are to be removed; all races, nations, and colours extinguished in one common bond of brotherhood; and the whole family of man (at least those who reject not his love) restored to communion with one another and with God. This is the great idea of a Church. Sin has separated all, and grace shall reunite all. Under the headship of Christ we have got a new rallying-point for the nations, and the living streams that proceed from the sanctuary on high are drawing to the Lord all that is good, or great, or excellent, among the children of men. The communion of our verse is two-fold.

II. "That ye may have fellowship *with us*," viz. the communion of the saints with one another, which includes at least the following particulars:—



1st. They have common *names*, titles, and privileges; they all belong to the one family of God, who has begotten them all by the word of his grace; they are all members of the one body of Jesus, the living Head of them all; they are all equally (though of different sizes, &c.) stones in the one temple of God, branches of the true vine, whose husbandman the Father is; they all have one banner, the cross; one home in heaven; one enemy, sin; one aim, the glory of God; and one Sanctifier, the Holy Ghost the Comforter.

2dly, They leave common *ordinances*, both in the Gospel and in the kingdom; the distinctions of the world are unknown here; the rich and the poor, the prince and the beggar, meet as equals around the table of the Lord; they are all washed in the same laver of regeneration; they all sit under the same administration of the word of God; and they are all heirs of the same gracious promise; their communion is simple and perfect; they may be said to have all things in common; they are equally fallen and equally redeemed; and they have all equally, and at all times, free access to the throne of grace.

3dly, We may say further, that one common *life* flows through them, for they are members of the one body, and branches of the one living Vine. There is one blood in the family, one cement in the temple, and one sap in the vine. Seeing, then, that this is so, and intended to be so, how fearful must the spirit of schism and separation be in the sight of our blessed Redeemer! His robe was seamless, and his Church should be one. The Church of Rome began this principle of schism and separation by making human ordinances, not to say doctrines of devils, terms of communion: the Church of England shuts out from her communion all those who will not kneel: and latterly, it appears, the established Church of Scotland has adopted the broad principle of ecclesiastical exclusiveness. Most wretched are all these works of the flesh! The various churches of Christ, without any human headship, without the tyranny of a sectarian priesthood; equal and independent as He left them,

lying like stars in his right hand; corresponding with one another and recognising one another as members of the church universal, should feel themselves bound to one another by the strongest of all bonds, the communion of the body and blood of Christ; should humble themselves before Him who loves and redeemed them all; and cherish, in every possible way, the sympathies and mutual affections which bind them to one another and to their living Head in heaven.

III. Then, again, the apostle assures us, that “our fellowship is with the *Father and with his Son Jesus Christ*,” (see John xvi. 21. 2 Cor. i. 9. 1 John ii. 24). We shall only touch very lightly the great subject of *communion with God*, inasmuch as it comes often before us in this epistle, and we shall have to notice it on many occasions.

1st. This communion *presupposes* much. It takes for granted that we have become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus; that the suspicions and doubts which by nature encompass us, have been removed by the work of the Spirit, even as the clouds and darkness which surrounded the throne of God have been removed by the work of the Son. He beholds us with the eye and the heart of a father, and we approach Him with the love, confidence, and simplicity of children. The way of access has been opened in the atonement of Christ; the power and love of sin in us has been broken by the Holy Spirit the Sanctifier; our former relations to the world and the old Adam very much weakened or dissolved; so that the heart and the conscience, and the whole soul, can enter into fellowship with the Father and the Son.

2dly. As to the *ways* in which we have this fellowship, these are innumerable. In the silence of the individual heart, in the secrecy of the closet when the doors are shut, in the social circle where the brethren meet for prayer, in the churches when the public service proceeds, and in the temple of the universe when we rise “from nature up to nature’s God;” when the

principle of life and love becomes strong in the soul, and our conversation is really in heaven, where our hearts and our Saviour, and our treasures are ; then, indeed, every way is a path of holiness, every act is an act of worship, and our whole walk and conversation is communion with God. We walk with Him like Enoch : the life which we live in the flesh is a life of constant faith on the Son of God. We see his footsteps in all history and nature, and we trace every blessing of providence and grace to Him alone. We realise the truth, that in Him we live, and move, and have our being.

3dly. The *consequences* of this fellowship are blessed and satisfactory in the highest degree. Sin becomes more and more hateful as we learn more of the love, and grace, and beauty of our God : the world loses its charm over us, and the flesh its power, in proportion as we realise our nearness to Him, and the strong, holy relations that bind us together. Duty soon becomes a pleasure, and pleasure rises into delight and extasy in the holy consciousness of communion with God. In this heavenly fellowship we learn the value of the Holy Scripture, and the infinite glories of the person of Christ. We, who formerly were alienated in our minds, are brought to delight in the will and the ways of the holy God. This fellowship transforms us into his image, and brightens our earthly character with some tints of heavenly brightness. It is when we remain in the mount of prayer that our character, like the face of Moses, becomes radiant with the heavenly light ; and it is this very fellowship which shall change us into the likeness of his glory. (1 John iii. 3.)

“The promise stands for ever sure,  
And we shall in Thine image shine,  
Partakers of a nature pure,  
Holy, angelical, divine;  
In spirit joined to Thee, the Son,  
As Thou art with Thy Father one.”

*D. Χαρά, THE BELIEVER'S "JOY."*

This fourth verse tells us the purpose of the apostle in writing these things, "That your joy may be full." This seems to be one more object of the epistle, and truly there is hardly any other part of the word of God which sheds such a joyful serenity through the soul. The character of the Supreme Being which he delights to dwell on, is his *love*; and the subjects mentioned by the apostle are peculiarly calculated to fill us with joy. He has spoken of Jesus the Word, who reveals the Creator; of Jesus the Life Eternal, coming down into the region of sin and death for our sakes; and of the saints' everlasting fellowship with one another and with God. These are indeed sources of joy to the believer, fountains of living waters to fertilize and refresh the weary heritage of God. The believer, of all men, should be the most joyful and happy. He has the well-grounded conviction that his sins are forgiven him for the Redeemer's sake, and that in life and in death his Father's love will never abandon him. His joy should be full. (John xv. 11. xvi. 24. 2 John 12.) The object of our faith, love, and admiration is *perfect* and glorious; the work of redemption on the cross is perfect; the promises of God, which gild the future with such radiance, are full and perfect; the gifts, and fruits, and powers of the Holy Ghost for the outfit and endowment of the church are full and perfect; and why should our joy not be full? Is not the kingdom which we have received a kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy (*χαρά*) in the Holy Ghost? (Rom. xiv. 17.) Does not the Apostle Paul speak of the *joy of faith* (Phil. i. 25); and how often are we exhorted to *rejoice*, to *rejoice in the Lord*, &c. (Phil. ii. 1. 2 Cor. xiii. 11. Phil. iv. 4. Rom. xii. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 13.)

"None are unhappy: all have cause to smile,  
But such as to themselves that cause deny."

Tell me, if you can, what is wanting to make your joy full. Here, then, is a kingdom for the wretched, a Saviour for the



sinful, life for the dead or dying, and communion with God for the alienated and perishing creation. His love is full and overflowing; and remember, it is a love to *you*—to *thee*, brother, whoever thou art, and whatever be thy guilty suspicions of Him. Rejoice, then, in Him, and let his love flow into you, and fill your heart with joy unspeakable and full of glory. How rich and noble the theme of redeeming love! O God, let us dwell in Thee! Let our joy in Thee be full and perfect!

“Thou hidden source of calm repose;  
Thou all-sufficient love divine;  
My help and refuge from my foes,  
Secure I am, if Thou art mine:  
And, lo! from sin, and grief, and shame,  
I hide me, Jesus! in Thy Name.

Jesus, my all in all Thou art,  
My rest in toil, my ease in pain;  
The balm to heal my broken heart,  
In storms my peace, in loss my gain;  
My joy beneath the tyrant's frown;  
In shame, my glory and my crown.”

## CHAPTER II.

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Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία  
ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἀναγ-  
γέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς φῶς  
ἐστὶ, καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ  
ἐστὶν οὐδεμία.

Ἐὰν εἰπῶμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν  
ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐν τῷ  
σκότει περιπατῶμεν, ψευδόμεθα,  
καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν.

Ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶ-  
μεν, ὥς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτὶ,  
κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων,  
καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ  
υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ  
πάσης ἁμαρτίας.

This then is the message which  
we have heard of him, and declare  
unto you, that God is light, and  
in him is no darkness at all.

If we say that we have fellow-  
ship with him, and walk in dark-  
ness, we lie, and do not the truth:

But if we walk in the light, as  
he is in the light, we have fellow-  
ship with one another, and the  
blood of Jesus Christ his Son  
cleanseth us from all sin.

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THE first four verses form the introduction, and tell us the purpose of the epistle ; and now we come to the substance of the apostolic doctrine to be communicated to the believing Church. The great doctrines of the person and work of the Redeemer are asserted and reiterated by the apostle as the foundation of all true faith, and the only basis of the sinner's hope for time and for eternity. Jesus Christ is the eternal Revealer of the Great Father of the universe, in whom, as in a mirror, the attributes and character of the invisible and unapproachable Jehovah are revealed to the Church, to the angels, and the whole creation. This eternal Logos was, for our salvation, manifested in the human nature as the kinsman Redeemer, as true and very man, born of the substance of the Virgin Mary, and in no respect save sin differing from his brethren : this divine Word was no mere inspiration, or act of wisdom and power by *which*, but a distinct and independent person by *whom*, God created the universe and redeemed the human race. We the Apostles are his witnesses, for we have seen, heard, and handled him ; and we make known to you the glorious communion which all believers have with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. Such is the substance of the Apostle's introduction ; and now, in the fifth and following verses, we come to the more special doctrines and duties which the Apostle brings before the mind of the Church.

A. THE MESSAGE, ἡ ἐπαγγελία, or, better, ἀγγελία.

The word ἐπαγγελία occurs fifty-four times in the New Testa-

ment, and is by our translators regularly and uniformly translated by the word *promise*, except in this passage which we are now considering. Whether, in classical authors, the word has ever the meaning of *message* may be doubted, notwithstanding the opinion of Lücke and others; but it is certain that in the New Testament it never has, if our text be not an exception; and it is remarkable, that in no version or translation that I know of has any one ventured in this passage to render the word by its proper equivalent, *promise*. Luther has “Verkündigung,” so have the German translators generally; Beza, “Nuncium;” the Vulgate has “Annunciatio;” Martin has “La declaration;” and Ostervald, trying to come as near the proper meaning of ἡ ἐπαγγελία as possible, has “La doctrine.” Dr. Macknight thinks our translators followed some ancient manuscripts and versions which have ἀγγελία, *message*, which is not probable. Certain it is, indeed, that the best authorities, ancient and modern, have ἀγγελία, and undoubtedly it should be restored to the text.

I. Let us contemplate the Gospel for a moment in general as a *divine message*. It is, indeed, often presented in the form of a message from God, though the special word ἀγγελία is used only here and 1 John iii. 11; and the prophets in the Old, and the Apostles in the New Testament, are often called ambassadors from God to announce to mankind the Word of reconciliation. (2 Cor. v. 20; Eph. vi. 20 (in both *πρεσβεύειν*); compare Job xxxiii. 23.)

1st. If we consider the whole Gospel as a message from God, then the Messenger, the ἀγγελὸς, is the Lord Jesus Christ. Malachi (iii. 2) calls him הָאֲדֹנָי אֲשֶׁר-אַתֶּם מְבַקְשִׁים *the Lord whom ye seek*, and the angel of the covenant whom ye delight in, מְלֹאךְ הַבְּרִית אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם תִּמְצִי, before whom the Baptist was sent to prepare the way, (Matt. iii. 11. John i. 26. iii. 28). It is evidently in reference to the future work of the coming deliverer that Jacob calls him the Redeeming



Angel, מַלְאָךְ הַגָּאֵל (Gen. xlviii. 16); and as the Mediator in whom we have access to God. Isaiah calls him מַלְאָךְ פָּנָיו the Angel of his presence, who saves his people from their sins (Is. lxiii. 9). The Jewish Rabbis also describe the Messiah as the Angel of the Lord, and give him nearly all the attributes of the New-Testament Redeemer. Jesus, therefore, is the great Messenger of the New Covenant, from whose lips we are to receive the heavenly message. It comes from God to his sinful creatures, and the Message-bearer is his Son. This is the *lowest* character attributed to Jesus in the Bible, and yet it is very dear to the Saints of God. He brings us good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people. He is the “sent one” from whom we are to learn the whole counsels of God.

2dly. We observe that “message” includes the idea of *distance*, or separation, and in every Gospel-message it is undoubtedly taken for granted that we are fallen, alienated creatures, shut out from paradise, and standing at a moral distance from God. Sin has placed the flaming sword over the way to the tree of life, and if there be any communications now between heaven and earth, they must proceed from the mercy-seat above, in the way of message and mediation. All right on our part has passed away from the time that sin entered; and, as helpless, self-condemned sinners, we have nothing to expect save the judgments that are appointed to follow the violation of the divine law. How wide the separation is between the soul and God we may learn in many ways. We see it in the judgments already executed upon the world, and in those that are still threatened; we see it in the corruption and fearful apostacy of the nations, in the universal reign of idolatry among the heathen, and in the system of blasphemy—human merit and creature worship—which has attained such stature in the Christian church.

3dly. This Gospel-message to the fallen race contemplates Jehovah, the Lord and King of the Universe, as the fountain of divine Mercy, to whose spontaneous bounty we owe both the proclamations of grace, and the promises of future glory. The

Message comes from Him; the living waters for the refreshing of a weary world flow from his throne; and He is the only fountain of love, and blessedness, and joy for the whole creation. He begins, carries on, and ends the work of mercy in the soul. He loves, and then we love in return; we receive the message of his Gospel, and we receive our creation without money and without price at his beneficent hand; He gives, and we receive; He proclaims pardon, and we accept his terms; He announces his fatherly will, and we rejoice to do it. This is one of the most attractive aspects in which we can contemplate God; and it has the advantage, that it glorifies the Creator and humbles the creature. The doctrines of the Gospel, the pardoning mercy of the cross, the holiness of the believer, the promise of glory and immortality, are all from *Him*, our Father and our God; and the more we connect all our blessings and enjoyments with Him, the holier, the happier, and the more thankful shall we be. God is Love; and out of this boundless fountain all the bounties of creation, providence, and redemption flow.

“O God, of good the unfathomed sea!  
Who would not give his heart to thee?  
Who would not love Thee with his might?  
O Jesus, lover of mankind,  
Who would not his whole soul and mind,  
With all his strength, to Thee unite?”

4thly. It is well to remember something of the general *notion* of this divine message, in order that the proclamations of mercy may work their intent upon our minds. Remember it is a message from *God* to *thee*, and consequently most necessary and important. Neglect it not, for in doing so thou art quenching the flame of life and love in the soul. It is a *free* message. the poor and rich are equally invited to hear the joyful sound; “and those that have no money, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.”

“Ho! ye that thirst, approach the spring  
 Where living waters flow,  
 Free to that sacred fountain all,  
 Without a price, may go!”

It is *universal*: the message is from God to man, and its provisions are more than sufficient for the species. All other religions are local, and intended for nations and districts, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ is for all ages and for the whole family of man. The Jews had their national temple at Jerusalem, the Samaritans turn to Mount Gerizim when they pray, and the Moslems make their pilgrimage to the tomb of their prophet at Mecca. These are so many centres of earthly systems which are destined to perish and be forgotten. In the Gospel there is nothing of this. Its provisions are universal; its claims are upon the acceptance of men; its promises are spiritual, and suited for all times, varieties, and conditions of the human race. Hence the fearful guilt of rejecting the Gospel. But let us turn now to the special Message mentioned in our text.

## II. Ὁ Θεὸς φῶς ἐστί, “*God is Light.*”

This remarkable expression may be compared with the assertion (1 John iv. 8) ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν, “*God is Love,*” which two abstract propositions seem to refer to the natural and moral attributes of God. Light and love are the two most comprehensive symbols of the nature of the Deity as the all-knowing and yet all-loving God. The assertion “*God is Light*” means, no doubt, that God is the pure, holy, eternal Spirit, who created the universe; the fountain of all purity, holiness, knowledge, and fertility in the world. This will appear still more clearly when we consider—

1st. The *meanings* of the word φῶς, or **אור**. No doubt the first and natural application of the word is to the sun, or the light which comes from it (2 Cor. iv. 6. Gen. i. 3, 4, 18. Luke viii. 16. Rev. xxii. 5). Hence, being the most splendid, subtile,

and glorious of material substances, it is easily and naturally applied to spiritual and divine things. It is opposed to darkness, and denotes the *true knowledge* of God in Jesus Christ (John iii. 19. Acts xxvi. 18, &c.); and hence believers are the children of light, and are called upon to walk in the light of the Gospel. Hence God is called Light because all knowledge, holiness, and joy come from Him. He is the fountain of divine grace and knowledge for the universe; the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness nor shadow of turning. We walk in light when we walk in Him, viz. in the conscious fellowship of his love, feeling that He is near, that his eye is ever upon us, and that his ear is ever open to our cry. It is applied in the New Testament personally to the authors or dispensers of divine truth, and especially to the Lord Jesus Christ (John i. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9. iii. 19). He is the Light of the world. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." In the abstract, and independent of all limitation, it is asserted ὁ Θεὸς φῶς ἐστίν, "God is Light," not τὸ φῶς, which would have diminished the sublimity of the sentence, and would have been true only as applied to known and definite objects. Luther has failed here entirely, as his translation, "Gott ist ein Licht," is no just rendering of the sublime original. Jesus is never called absolutely φῶς (John xii. 46 is no exception, as φῶς has the meaning of *a light*), but always τὸ φῶς, the known, manifested Light of the world. We see the relations between the Father and the Son in these forms of expression, or rather between the godhead in its own illimitable universality, and godhead related to the creatures. The ὁ Θεὸς or τὸ Θεῖον, "God," absolutely contemplated in the illimitable, unapproachable, incomprehensible splendour and glory of his nature, is φῶς, *Light*; but Jesus Christ, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν μορφῇ δουλοῦ (Phil. ii. 7), the God-Man, the only-begotten Son and revealer of God, is τὸ φῶς, the Light of the world. This φῶς is connected both with the Father and the Son, though in somewhat different ways; and the exposition of our text will become clearer when



we remember something of the nature and attributes of light.

2dly. Its *nature and attributes*. We observe, that though we are conversant with light daily and hourly, yet its nature is *unknown*. In this respect it is one of the most glorious symbols of the Deity. We know Him, yet we feel Him not. No man hath seen God at any time. We cannot by searching find out God to perfection. He is, in fact, as to his essence or nature, absolutely unknown to us, though his hands have formed us, and we live, move, and have our being amidst the glories of his creation. He is with us at all times, yea, nearer and dearer to us than any creature can be or should be, and yet how little do we know and feel of his presence and love, not to speak of his nature and attributes! But, like the light, though Himself unknown, He reveals and enlightens all things. The universe is an inexplicable mystery without the admission of his being and attributes. Admit a creating, governing, and redeeming God, and you have the explanation of the creation. Light is connected with *heat*; and so the light which comes from God is connected with the transforming power of his mercy. It enlightens the head and warms the heart; it enlarges the circles of our knowledge, and expands our hearts with the fervour of divine love. Light in the natural world is connected with *fertility*, and without it all forms of life dwindle away and die. So is it in grace also. If you think you can bear the fruits of righteousness without embracing the doctrines of the Gospel, you deceive yourselves. It is when growing under the radiance of the Sun of Righteousness that the fruits of the trees of life ripen and become fit for the Master's use. Jesus Himself says, "Sanctify them by thy truth: thy word is truth." Our spiritual life depends on the knowledge of the mysteries of the Gospel, as much as the natural life of the plants and animals depends on the light and heat of the sun. The doctrines of the cross are the source of all the fertility, love, and activity of the church of God; and the most practical preaching, indeed

the only really practicable preaching, is to open up to the people the fountains of redeeming love. They that know thy name shall put their trust in Thee.

“Talk they of morals! O, Thou bleeding Lamb,  
The grand morality is love to thee!”

3dly. *Symbolism*. It is remarkable, and very instructive in tracing the principle of symbolism in the Scripture, to find how sparingly symbols are applied to the Father and the Spirit, and how frequently to the Son. It is said, indeed, God is Light, and God is Love, and our God is a consuming fire. The Holy Spirit, also, is compared to a dove, to fire, to water, to oil, and to the wind. There seem, therefore, to be three general symbols of God, and five of the Holy Spirit, in the sacred writings; but when we come to read of Christ it is quite different. Every thing must testify of Him. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; the Rock and the Refuge City, the Lamb and the Lion, and the City of the Valley, the Rose of Sharon and the Living Vine; He is the Sun, and the Star, and the Light of Life. All names, and titles, and offices centre in his glorious person, and point to Him as their end. Nor is it difficult to see the reason of this. He is related to the creation by the incarnation, and thus the human heart naturally turns to Him as being the Kinsman-Redeemer. He is the God-Man, and every thing that can represent love, power, condescension, and grace, may be applied to Him. But, finally, light is a symbol of the blessedness and glory in which the Lord dwells, a type of the splendour of the beatific vision of the skies. Thus, God is said to dwell in light, which no man can approach unto, *φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπρόσιτον* (1 Tim. vi. 16; compare Rev. xxi. 24. Ps. civ. 2). Thus the Redeemer on the mount, and when He appeared to the persecutor near Damascus, was surrounded by this divine splendour (Matt. xvii. 2. Acts ix. 3); the angels, too, when they appear, are often accompanied by this light (Acts xii. 7); and the glorified saints are represented as dwelling in light (Col. i. 12). Thus in light we

see the glorious symbol of that blessed state where we shall know even as we are known, where sin, and sorrow, and death are no longer the condition of our being, but where purity and knowledge, peace and joy, hold their everlasting reign.

We come now to the sixth verse, of which the substance is—

B. ἡ κοινωνία — the sanctifying nature of communion with God.

The fellowship which we have with God, says the apostle, is holy, and necessarily sanctifies the soul; and whoever pretends to this communion, and yet walks in darkness, is a liar and a hypocrite. The Gospel which we have received is the fountain of purity and rectitude, and to pretend to have received it while we are walking in sin and cherishing the works of the flesh, is a fatal delusion and contradiction. Σκότος, darkness, like חֹשֶׁךְ in Hebrew, is used for ignorance, blindness, and deceit (Matt. iv. 16. Luke i. 79. Ps. cvii. 10. Matt. vi. 23); and therefore to walk in darkness is to remain in the kingdom of darkness, where Satan rules and practises the rites and abominations of his fleshly and diabolical tyranny. It is to remain in the flesh and fulfil the lusts of the flesh, to prefer Egypt to Canaan, and heathenism to the moral dignity and beauty of the Christian profession.

#### I. What is this κοινωνία, or *fellowship*?

It is much easier felt than described. It begins in the conversion of the soul, when the long-alienated prodigal for the first time falls on his father's neck and weeps for joy. The father's arms are around him, the father's house is open to him, and the father's love proclaims him forgiven. This is communion. From this moment there is a new relationship established between them, and one main privilege of it is free intercourse and fellowship with the father. When this communion is close and intimate in the more solemn acts of religion, such as prayer, adoration, and contemplation, it may be described as a holy

extacy of the soul, in which the softened melting heart flows out towards the Creator and Redeemer in the confidence of pure and peaceful joy. We see the wonderful character of our God, and the provisions which He has made for our salvation. We see in his light the beauty of holiness, and the awful deformity and defilement of sin ; and by his Spirit we are enabled to rejoice in the divine will. All the joy which the soul has in prayer and the reading of the word, and in breaking the bread of life at the table of the Lord, arises from this fellowship. We feel it most extatically on our knees in confessing sin and receiving the forgiveness of it, or at the communion of the last supper, when we have the fellowship of the body and blood of Christ. But there may be true and real fellowship with God without this divine and overwhelming extacy. The only requisite to it is, that we do not walk in darkness ; and whenever we are seeking honestly to do the will of God in our daily life and conversation, cherishing no idols which we are unwilling to destroy, and refusing no sacrifice which the Gospel brings with it, then, in our prayers and our private and public services, in the acts of our minds and the labours of our hands, in our whole life, and character, and conversation, we have real communion with God. Our walk is with God, and our life is hid with Christ in God ; and when Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.

II. But how does this communion sanctify the soul ? It does so in many ways. It leads us to deeper views of the *ordinances* of God, and leads us to expect more from Him. We feel that we are honouring him the more in proportion as we ask the more, for the fountains of his grace are full and overflowing. The public and private services of religion are no longer decent rites merely, which it is our duty to perform, but channels of rich blessings between the Father and his needy children. We go expecting much, and we are not disappointed, for his recorded purpose is that our joy may be full (John xv. 11.



xvi. 24. xvii. 13. 1 John i. 4.) Communion of soul with the great Creator is indeed the central idea in all ordinances of the Gospel, and all the rites of the church; and where it is lost sight of, the stately ceremonial of external worship, be it Jewish, Popish, or Evangelical, becomes an organized hypocrisy, without any saving or sanctifying power. But this holy communion, of which our apostle speaks, leads us directly to *imitate* God himself, inasmuch as it brings us and keeps us in his immediate presence. We are thus brought into frequent contact with the source and fountain of all perfection, and in every approach we become more and more assimilated to his likeness. The force of moral influences in the formation of character is immense; and we cannot be long in the presence of what is great and noble and excellent, without imbibing generous and ennobling sentiments. Our prayers will destroy our sins, or our sins will destroy our prayers. The presence is too holy for secret sin indulgence, and every repeated act of fellowship with Him whom we love weakens the ties that bind us to the world. In Him we find the source of power, and we become strong: his wisdom gives us confidence in the journey of life; and, beholding his perfect character, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. Nor does this assimilating process cease with the present state of things; for it is written concerning the coming of the Lord, and the union of believers with Him, "Then shall we be like him, for we shall see Him as He is (1 John iii. 3). By standing around the cross we are changed into the image of the patient dying Lamb, bearing the cross with Him, and crucifying the flesh with its affections and lusts; by beholding Him in his glory and majesty, in the brightness, beauty, and royal state of his kingdom, we shall be transformed into the likeness of his kingly splendour, like the burden-bearer on earth, and like the sceptre-bearer in heaven; and this arises from our communion with Him in both cases. Oh, then, let us dwell near Him! Let us live, walk, labour, and die in communion with Him! No burden too heavy for us

to bear if thou art with us ; no danger terrifies when thou art near ; no temptation overpowers when we are conscious of thy Love ! Oh, Son of God and Saviour of the world, I will seek my communion, my joy, my crown, my all in Thee ! Oh, but this world has little to give when it gives its all as compensation for the loss of fellowship with thee ! Oh, then, let us follow Him in the fellowship of his sufferings, till we reach the promised rest and joy above.

“ On, champions blest, in Jesus’ name,  
 Short be your strife, your triumph full,  
 Till every heart have caught your flame,  
 And, lightened of the world’s misrule,  
 Ye soar those elder saints to meet,  
 Gathered long since at Jesus’ feet,  
 No world of passions to destroy,  
 Your prayers and struggles o’er, your task all praise and joy.”

Finally, on this subject of fellowship with Jesus and our Father in heaven, the apostle in one passage says that it dispels darkness, so that it is absolutely impossible to enjoy it and at the same time to walk in darkness. If, then, you wish a serene and peaceful walk with God, you must cherish communion with Him : if you desire the light of truth to shine on your path, you must walk in Him who is the Light. There is no way of dispelling this moral darkness but fellowship with God. In Him you find light and life and joy. You can have no fellowship with Him but in the *truth* ; and all those who seek fellowship with God in systems of falsehood and superstition deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them. We come now to the seventh verse, which contains

#### C. THE WALK IN LIGHT, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

The apostle now passes from the hypocrites who say they have fellowship with God, while they walk in darkness, to the

blessed privileges of those who really believe the Gospel, and walk in its ways. "But if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (ver. 7.)

I. Here the first question obviously is, What is this *walking in the light*? And here we must observe that the life of the believer is compared to many things in the holy Scriptures: it is a journey like that of Israel in the wilderness to the promised land; it is a heavenly pilgrimage which we undertake when, like Bunyan's pilgrim, we abandon the city of destruction, and set out for the New Jerusalem; it is the great race of life, in which we lay aside every weight, and the sins that do so easily beset us, that we may run with patience our appointed course; it is called the fight of faith, the Christian warfare, when we enlist as good and faithful soldiers of Christ under the banner of the cross: and hence, leaving aside the symbols of fierce and tumultuous contendings, the apostle compares it to a quiet and peaceful *walk* with God in this our lowly and mortal estate. May we not, ere we begin to describe it, breathe out the desires of our hearts in the words of our sweetest Christian poet—

"Oh for a closer walk with God,  
A calm and heavenly frame,  
A light to shine upon the road,  
That leads me to the Lamb."

Περιπατεῖν like הִלֵּךְ (connected with הָמַיִם, Ps. xv. 2, with צִדְקוֹת, Is. xxxiii. 15, with רוּחַ וְשָׁקֶר Mic. ii. 11), is often used in a moral figurative sense, of which we select the following examples; "to walk εὖσχημόνως decently or honestly;" τοῖς ἔθεσι περιπατεῖν, "to walk after the customs" (Acts xxi. 21); ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς, "to walk in newness of life" (Rom. vi. 4. 2 Cor. iv. 2. 2 Eph. ii. 2); ἐν ἀληθείᾳ περιπατεῖν, "to walk in truth" (2 John iv. 3 John 3, 4); ἐν Χριστῷ περιπατεῖν, "to walk in Christ." Hence we have the forms of expression, "Walk in

love," "Walk in the light," and many similar phrases, both in the Scriptures and in theological writings. To *walk*, therefore, in all these cases, means, to *live*, to *act*, to *spend one's life*, in the manner specified in the particular texts. We shall mention a few characteristics of the walk, that we may be able to compare our own life and conversation with the word of God.

First. It is a walk in *light*, or, as our text has it, in the *light*, as He is in the light. Now this can mean nothing less than that we are to walk according to the Gospel of God, which is the light that has arisen to illuminate the darkness of the world; it can mean nothing less than that we are to set ourselves honestly and diligently, as believers on the Son of God, to keep the commandments of our Father who is in heaven; it can mean nothing less than that we abjure and reject for evermore all the deeds of darkness of which the world is full, all the works of the flesh, which are the tokens of our corruption, and all the temptations of men or angels or devils which would lead us away from the purity and holiness of the Gospel. For this walk in light a clean conscience is absolutely necessary; and as it is the pure in heart that shall see God, so they alone can walk in the light of God's holy presence. All dishonesty in our dealings with man, all subtle plans and intricate ways to obtain our purposes, all bluntness of conscience and insensibility to the high and ennobling principles of gospel morality are inconsistent with this walk in the light, and must be abandoned. There are some who admit the claims of the Gospel upon our obedience, but yet do not submit their persons and their conduct to its righteous laws: these do not walk in light, but in darkness, whatever may be the glare of worldly splendour that surrounds them; and they can never say, "We have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Christ cleanseth us from all sin." He walks in the light who receives the Gospel of God's grace as a little child, and rejoices in the strength and purity which it brings; he walks in the light whose delight is in the will of God, and whose affections are placed on things above, where



Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; he is in the light, and walks in the light, who, washed in the Saviour's blood and clothed with his righteousness, dedicates every faculty of the mind and every fibre of the body to the Saviour's service, and who longs, with unquenchable ardour, to be conformed in body, soul, and spirit to the Saviour's character. This is a walk worthy of God, who requires it, and worthy of the redeemed church, which alone can perform it.

2dly. *It is a walk in Love* (Eph. v. 2). I have already made the observation, that the Light which God gives, like all light on earth, is connected with heat, viz. with the love of God shed abroad in our hearts. The tendency of this walk in light is, not to puff us up with unprofitable knowledge and vain speculations, but to humble us by shewing us the blackness and enormity of our sins, that we may the more heartily magnify the mercy of God in forgiving them for the Redeemer's sake. Light leads to love. The more we know of Him, the more the heart expands under the radiance of his love, until the pardoned, sanctified, satisfied soul finds no resting place or home, save in Him alone. We cannot speak of God, and the cross of Christ, and the coming kingdom, in the way geologists speak of the strata and formation of the globe. The light which the Gospel sheds over us is accompanied with such a transforming fervour, that our hearts burn within us at every fresh discovery of divine mercy, and the feelings of love, joy, adoration, thankfulness, and praise, break forth from our lips in the songs and hallelujahs of redeeming grace. If you are walking in love you are walking in light; and if you are not walking in love, you are not walking in the light, as He is in the light. Make no pretension to a full and cordial reception of the Gospel system of truth, while the heart remains unaffected, and the passions, emotions, and all the most active powers of the soul do no homage to the Sun of Righteousness, arising with healing on his wings. Clearness of head may consist well enough with coldness of heart in logic, mathematics, and

German criticism, but in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ it is not so; for it is written, "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." And again it is written, "They that know thy name shall put their trust in thee."

"O Love, I languish at thy stay!  
 I pine for thee with lingering smart,  
 Weary and faint through long delay:  
 When wilt Thou come into my heart?  
 From sin and sorrow set me free,  
 And swallow up my soul in thee."

3dly. *περιπατεῖν* is connected with *πίστις* (2 Cor. v. 7). We walk by faith, and not by sight. The light of the glorious Gospel of the blessed God shines around us in vain if we have not the eye of faith to see it. Hence, thousands, perhaps millions, of our fellow-creatures, who walk in the midst of the golden candlesticks, and are consequently surrounded with the radiance of the Gospel splendour, live and die in darkness, because their eyes have not been opened to rejoice in its beams. Without faith it is impossible to please God. This is the medium or connecting link between the soul and the Saviour; and while it is wanting, these two must remain apart from one another. In vain He knocks at the door of the heart: there is no hand to open and let Him in; in vain the Spirit and the Bride say, Come, and the ambassadors of Christ, with a thousand voices, beseech you to be reconciled: there is no ear to hear; in vain is Jesus, the dying Lamb, the most wonderful, beautiful, and glorious object in the universe, set forth evidently crucified among you, when the eye is shut and the heart is cold. If, then, you wish to walk in the light of God's truth, and in constant communion with Him, you must see that faith is in lively exercise, that you may be able to realize his presence, his promises, and his gifts. Faith takes what He gives, believes what He says, goes where He commands, and rejoices in the

fulness, and freeness, and manifoldness of his grace. It has the power of seizing the intangible, seeing the invisible, bringing near what is distant, realizing the glories of the future, and appropriating to the individual the promises and proclamations that are made indifferently to all. It grows strong, like every spiritual faculty, by exercise, and enlarges the capacity for receiving and enjoying the more it receives and enjoys; and, with the longings of immortality, the farther and deeper it sees into the ocean-fulness of redeeming love, the more it longs to launch us into the glories of eternity.

4thly. We walk in good *company* when we walk in light, and this mitigates not a little the asperities of the journey, and inspires us with confidence and resolution to triumph over the enemies and the obstacles that are in the way. Every step that we take is under the eye of our heavenly Master, who Himself, as the captain of salvation, leads us on; every sorrow, and temptation, and trial that come upon us He has already borne, and a thousand times more, as the sacrifice for our sins; and, as with Peter, and Daniel, and the children in the furnace, in every time of difficulty He is ready to save; for it is well and beautifully said—

“In every pang that rends the heart  
The Man of Sorrows had a part:  
He sympathizes with our grief,  
And to the sufferer sends relief.”

And should any one think this example too high for us, then in that case he should remember that we are marching forward in the midst of the armies of the faithful, an innumerable multitude (Rev. vi. 9) of the noble, and virtuous, and holy of all nations, generations, and ages, whose standard and warfare are one from the beginning, who have all the same enemies to conquer, the same temptations and trials to triumph over, the same flesh and blood to crucify, the same waste, parched, howling wilderness to pass through, the same manna to feed them, the same water from the Rock, which is Christ, the

same cloudy pillar to guide them, and the same immortal hopes when the journey is done. He should remember that all flesh is the same flesh, and if they conquered, grace can make us conquer; and as they now stand victorious, with palms in their hands, so we, too, shall pass triumphantly over the bridge of death into the inheritance of the saints in light.

“ Oh could we stand where Moses stood,  
And view the landscape o’er,  
Not Jordan’s stream, nor death’s cold flood,  
Could fright us from the shore.”

Those who have gone before us see us from their seats in heaven, and the cloud of witnesses, *ρέφος μαρτύρων* (Heb. xii. 1), that surround us with acclamations of encouragement, point to the white robes of righteousness, and the palms of victory, and the crowns of glory, which the Redeemer has in store for us when the toils of our pilgrimage are ended. We are not alone. The saints which are the excellent of the earth, in whom all his delights are placed, are with us. The worthies of the former dispensations, the patriarchs, and prophets, and heroes of the faith, are with us. The apostles of the Lamb, the glorious army of the martyrs, the death-defying members of the Christian church in her apostolic glories, are our friends and companions in this walk of faith. When we walk in the light as He is in the light, we are surrounded by all that is good, and great, and noble upon the earth. We are members of a corporation which shall survive the ruins of empires and the dissolution of the globe itself. We are stones in the living temple which God Himself is building as the monument of his eternal mercy. We are heirs of the kingdom of glory which the Redeemer has prepared for his people from the foundation of the world. Surely such considerations may cheer us in the pilgrimage of life.

II. The *consequences* of this walking in the light are two—fellowship, and deliverance from sin.

1st. The apostle says we have *fellowship* with one another. The *μετ’ ἀλλήλων* has been here felt to be a difficulty from the



earliest ages, and this has given rise to a reading found in manuscripts and ancient fathers, *μετ' αὐτοῦ*; and, in the sense of *with Him*, Calvin explains it, “mutua communio Dei et sanctorum.” This is contrary to the usage of the apostle in every other passage where the word occurs (1 John iii. 23. iv. 7, 12. 2 John 5), where the *μετ' ἀλλήλων* can refer only to the fellowship of believers with one another, and so I explain it in our text. The meaning is, “If we walk worthy of the religion of Jesus Christ, we must have fellowship with one another: being members of one Head, we are members one of another.” It is this walk in light, and love, and faith, that brought us into contact with one another, and while we remain in it our communion with one another is complete and perfect. This is the first consequence of walking in the light.

2dly. And the next is, that “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” There is no reference here to the justification of the believer through the blood of Christ, which is the chief doctrine of the apostle of the Gentiles. The *καθαρίζει* points to the sanctification of the believer through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon the heart and conscience, and this connects the *αἷμα* very closely with the *φῶς*, in the following way: if we continue walking in the light we may be sure that every dark spot will be manifested, and we will be brought under the purifying influence of Christ’s dying love. But this phrase occurs often (*αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ*), and requires to be particularly considered.

(1st) To this all the ancient sacrifices pointed as their ultimate end. The passover was a type of the death of Christ (1 Cor. v. 7). Almost all things are by the law purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Heb. ix. 22). The innumerable victims that were slain on the Jewish altars, and, I may add, the sacrifices of the nations generally, have absolutely no meaning, except in so far as they prefigure the great sacrifice of the cross, when the Son of God died to expiate the sin of the world.

(2dly) There is nothing more clearly or more frequently taught in the Bible than that the salvation of the human race depends altogether on the shedding of the blood of Christ (Acts xx. 28. Rom. iii. 25. v. 9. Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. Eph. ii. 13. Col. i. 20. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Heb. ix. 12, 14. x. 19. xiii. 12. Rev. i. 5. v. 9. vii. 14. xii. 11). Those, therefore, who reject the Scripture doctrine of atonement through the cross of Christ, do in very deed and fact reject the Scriptures themselves as of binding, controlling authority. There is no certain truth in the entire Bible if the expiatory death of the Lamb of God be not one of its most prominent doctrines. This is felt now so generally in Germany, that there is not a critic of any name who would venture to explain these texts on the old principles of rationalism. There are many, alas! too many, who reject the doctrines of the cross and the divinity of the Saviour, but they admit that the apostles and the Scriptures teach them. Like Priestley, they do not feel themselves obliged to follow the opinions of the apostles. So much, however, is gained out of the uproar and confusion of German exegesis, that these doctrines are contained in the Scriptures, and this is a great admission in behalf of the orthodox faith.

(3dly) The name which John, in our epistle, delights to give the Redeemer is *Jesus Christ, the Son of God*; and most striking is it that he never uses the term *Κυρίος*, "Lord," while in his Gospel it occurs more than fifty times. The reason of this seems to be, that the word *κύριος* denotes majesty and power, possession and sovereignty over the creation, and as such would be unsuitable to the purpose of the apostle in our epistle, which is, to bring before the church the privileges of the believer's sonship, and the beauties of holiness in the hidden life of faith. On the contrary, the three names mentioned in our text are the most suitable for his purpose which could have been chosen. *Jesus* is his human name, and connects Him with our race, and is consequently the sweetest of all his names, as it identifies Him with us.

“ Jesus, soft, harmonious name,  
 Every faithful heart’s desire,  
 See, thy followers, holy Lamb,  
 All at once to thee aspire !”

*Christ* the anointed is the name of office, and presents Him to our acceptance as the Prophet, Priest, and King of his church, in whom all knowledge, power, and mercy for the lost race are treasured up and distributed ; and the name *Son of God* presents Him to the believer at once as the possessor of the Father’s nature, and the head of the whole redeemed family. These three names all bear upon the doctrines of the believer’s sonship, and are therefore preferred by the apostle in this epistle. The word *Υἱός*, “ Son,” connects Him, indeed, in the most wonderful way, both with the Creator and the creation. *Son of God*, He possesses the nature and attributes of Deity ; *Son of man*, He is truly and really human, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, the second Adam and quickening Head of the creation ; *Son, or seed*, of Abraham, He is the Jew, and sums up in Himself the destinies and fortunes of that singular people ; *Son of David* the king, He is the fountain of royalty, the Prince of the kings of the earth, from whom all their sovereignty proceeds, and to whom all their homage is due ; *Son of the Virgin*, supernaturally begotten, and so free from the taint of the fall, He has honoured woman, by whom sin, and Satan, and death, were let into our world, by making her the gate of life through which the sin-avenger and the serpent-bruise came amongst us. Thus the expression, “ The blood of Jesus Christ his Son,” represents the dying love of the Redeemer in the fullest, strongest light. He died as *man*, the kinsman Redeemer of the race ; as *Christ*, the appointed Head and Mediator of the new covenant : and so closely was the divine nature united to the human, that his blood may be called the blood of the Son, and even the blood of God (Acts xx. 28). Hence the value of his death ; and hence the everlasting blessings to man and the creation that flow from it ; and hence the songs of the angels

and the redeemed in heaven around the throne of his glory  
(Rev. v. 9—14).

“Worthy the Lamb that died, they cry,  
To be exalted thus :  
Worthy the Lamb, let us reply,  
For He was slain for us.”

And hence the church, in all ages and in all circumstances of her varied history, hath ever held fast this doctrine of redeeming love as the secret source of her victory and strength, the central truth around which the various parts of the Christian system revolve, and the palladium of her safety, which must be defended at all hazards against every gainsayer. May we feel the sanctifying power of this wondrous love ! May the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanse us from all sin !

“Jesu, meines Lebens Leben,  
Jesu, meines Todes Tod,  
Der du dich für mich gegeben  
In die tiefste Seelennoth,  
In das äusserste Verderben,  
Nur dass ich nicht möchte sterben ;  
Tausend, tausend mal sei dir  
Liebster Jesu, Dank dafür.”



## CHAPTER III.

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Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν, ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν, καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

Ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, πιστός ἐστι καὶ δίκαιος, ἵνα ἀφῇ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας, καὶ καθαρίσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας.

Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἁμαρτήκαμεν, ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν, καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

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WE have followed the apostle in his delineations of God as the Light, and Jesus as the Life of men, and the saints as the children of light walking in the ways of their heavenly Father; and now the apostle leads us to other themes equally important, but of a more distressing character. The substance of the eighth verse is—

A. THE SINFULNESS OF MAN (ἁμαρτία).

This is an important doctrine of the Bible, inasmuch as it lies at the foundation of the whole Christian system, and without it the system of the Jews of old, and the doctrines of the cross, were quite unintelligible. If there be no sin we need no Saviour; if we are by nature pure and holy, the children of God and heirs of the heavenly kingdom, then, indeed, the Socinians are in the right, and the Rationalists have good reason in saying that the deity of Christ, and the atonement of the cross, and the future kingdom of righteousness and peace, are theories of the mind, and popular delusions.

I. *What saith the Scripture?*

It is manifest that, on the subject of sin, and on the forgiveness of sin, our great source of authority must be the word of God. Experience, heathenism, and history, may be brought to bear on the testimony of Scripture as a strong confirmation of the truth, but God himself must be our principal teacher on this important subject.

1st. It is a fact taught in the Bible that all men are fallen sinful creatures, even as our text asserts—"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." (See Eph. ii. 1—5. Ps. li. 5. Rom. v. 12, 14. 1 Kings viii. 46. 2 Chron. vi. 36. Job. ix. 2. xv. 14. Prov. xx. 9.) These passages, and many others, represent the whole species as

underlying the tyranny of sin, and all the consequences justly involved in it. Hence it is written, "As in Adam all have died, so in Christ shall all be made alive," viz. raised from the dead (1 Cor. xv. 22); and Paul (Rom. v.) argues out and establishes this doctrine at great length. (Comp. Gen. iii. 6 and 1 Cor. xv. 21).

2dly. The *facts* that are commonly met with in the providence of God establish this scriptural conclusion. We mention only the following. *Death* is universal, and death is the wages of sin (Rom. vi. 23. v. 12. Jos. i. 15). There is in the heart and *conscience* of mankind generally a certain fear and trembling at the approach of the last enemy, a shrinking from the judgment-bar of God, which is inexplicable save on the principle of universal sinfulness. As it is manifest, both from the word of God and the history of the nations, that all mankind are descended from one original in the beginning, so it is manifest, that, whether fallen or unfallen, they must be all in the *same* condition before God: one blood circulates through them all, and, being tainted, the stain is universal. Besides, what is history, save a gathering together of the crimes, the tyrannies, the corruptions of nations? Lay your hand on the map of the world, on whatever spot you please, and you will find its records mixed up with blood, ambition, and crime.

## II. What is the *nature* of this ἀμαρτία?

Many are willing to admit the sinfulness of mankind, and defend it in a certain sense, who yet seem to have no very deep views of its nature and consequences. The connections, relations, and fruits of sin are many, both in the word and the world. We mention the following—

1st. ἀμαρτία and ὄφεις. The serpent, which is the devil and Satan, is described in the Bible as the origin and sustainer of all sin in the human race (Gen. iii. 1. John. iv. 44. 2 Cor. xi. 3. Rev. xii. 9. xx. 2). He is the first mover of sin in the universe, and his malignant disposition rejoices only in the deeds of darkness and

the reign of temporal, spiritual, and eternal death. Sin stands in everlasting union with him; and hence, being the first, the greatest, and the most malignant of sinners, there is no mercy for him. He fell self-tempted, and we fell through his agency; and, according to Owen and others, this is one of the reasons that mercy is extended to man and not to the fallen angels.

2dly. *ἁμαρτία* is connected with *φύσις*, viz. with our very nature and condition, so that we are *τέκνα φύσει ὀργῆς*, children of wrath by nature, even as others (Eph. ii. 3). Nor is this otherwise to be understood, than that the common head and representative, Adam, fell, and his fallen nature, with all its fallen tendencies and proclivities, has descended to all his descendants; and the apostle assures us that we are, in consequence of this inherited corruption, children of wrath.

3dly. *ἁμαρτία* and *νόμος*. The Jews, and the nations to whom the word of God came, were and are *ὑπὸ νόμον*, under the binding force of the revealed mind of God, while the heathen nations are *ἄνομοι*, without law, viz. without any outwardly revealed law; but yet they are not, on that account, delivered from all obligations to serve and love God, for in that case they are a law unto themselves, and are bound to observe the eternal and indelible verities which are written on the hearts of all men (Rom. ii. 14). Law is related to sin in the following ways: (1) It creates the obligations to obedience, and consequently makes the violation of them *ἁμαρτία* (sin); so that where there is no law of any kind, there can be no transgression (Rom. iv. 15. v. 13). (2) Law is the right and proper measure of sin; so that in proportion as the law is clear, holy, righteous, and good, must be the heinousness of the transgression. This makes sin and unbelief, under the New-Testament dispensation, awfully heinous, inasmuch as we are living under the manifestation of Jehovah's mercy and love. Hence the remarkable expression "The strength of sin is the law" (1 Cor. xv. 56). In proportion as we see the nature and holy obligations of the law must be our estimate of the demerit of sin, and this is essentially



the same as the assertion "that through the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. iii. 20).

4thly. *ἁμαρτία* and *θάνατος*. Sin and death are in the Holy Scriptures related to one another as cause and effect (Rom. v. 12. vi. 23). I do not mean to say that God might not have created a race of sinless mortal beings; and it appears, from the late discoveries of geology, that there was death before the creation or fall of Adam, which reigned for ages and myriads of ages in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, before it pleased the Creator to introduce man, the ruler and interpreter of his works, into the world: but with regard to *our race*, the assertion is, "The wages of sin is death." Had Adam not sinned he would not have died, and his descendants would have inherited his holy and immortal nature. But while natural death is contained in the *ἁμαρτία*, it is evident the far bitterer and more terrible consequences of it are spiritual death, or alienation from the holy God, whose natural end is eternal death.

5thly. *ἁμαρτία* and *ὀψώνια* (Rom. vi. 23). So intimately is sin connected with punishment, that it is a very extensive usage among the Hebrews to put *sin* for its *consequences*; so that, in multitudes of passages, *ἁμαρτία*, *חַטָּאת*, *חַטֹּאת*, *עֲוֹן*, and *פֶּשַׁע*, are put for the imputation or punishment of sin (John i. 29. 1 John iii. 5. Rom. xi. 27. Heb. ix. 26. x. 11. 1 Pet. ii. 24). and so the forgiveness of sins (*ἄφεσις τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν*) is the remission of the penalty due to transgression (Matt. ix. 2, 5, 6. xxvi. 28. John xx. 2, 3. Heb. x. 4). See, in the Old Testament, the same usage (Zech. xiv. 19. Is. xl. 2. v. 18. Lev. xxii. 9. Lam. iii. 29. Prov. x. 16). Now this is most important, for it connects with it the idea of punishment, and identifies the two together in the moral government of God. Instead of sin being a mere accident that frequently occurs, or an absolute necessity which cannot be avoided, and for which punishment would be an injustice, it is presented to the mind in the word of God as absolutely identified with the vengeance and wrath of God, which is revealed from heaven against all un-

righteousness of men, be they Jews or Gentiles. The papists indeed, deny that the inborn proclivity to sin, called the lust of the flesh, ἐπιθυμία (Rom. vii. 7), is really sin at all, because they want to make the Ten Commandments so that their monks, and apostles, and saints may be able to keep them; but their opinion is opposed to the word of God (see Matt. v. 28. Eph. ii. 22. 2 Pet. ii. 10). All men, Jesus Christ excepted, who was begotten by the power of the Holy Ghost (Luke i. 35), are oppressed with this hereditary burden of sin and sorrow; nor was the Virgin Mary free from it, whatever the Jesuits and Dominicans may say to the contrary, seeing she descended from Adam by ordinary generation, and was subjected to death like the rest of mankind.

6thly. ἀμαρτία is therefore of two kinds, original and actual. Original sin is the hereditary corruption and poisonous taint which, spreading through the inner fountains of our being, has corrupted and polluted the whole stream of our life (Ps. li. 7. Rom. vii. 17). This is the black fountain of vileness, which, being stirred by the excitements and attractions from without, sends forth, like a volcano, such streams of burning corruption. This is that old Adam within us which it is the earnest endeavour of the sanctified and justified to crucify, and which by grace they are enabled to crucify, though some movements of his crucified members remain with most of them to the end of their earthly pilgrimage. This is that φρόνημα τῆς σαρκὸς (Rom. viii. 6, 7), or carnal mind, which is enmity against God, so intense and virulent that it can never be ameliorated, but must be rooted out and destroyed. All actual sins flow from this fountain, and the general tendency is, if the one be denied to reject the other also. Those who deny original sin make actual transgression of no great importance; and hence, as an easy and natural consequence, the dying love of Christ for sinful man is rejected as being unnecessary. The fall of man, the universal corruption of the race, and the redemption of Jesus Christ, are most intimately connected together.

7thly. *ἁμαρτία* contrasted with *δικαίωσις* and *χάρις* (Rom. v. 18, 19). If sin be the fountain from which all our miseries flow, then is grace and righteousness the corresponding fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness, that they may be washed away. And while sin must ever remain sin, and the fall of man the most awful event connected with our globe since the death of Christ, yet to the glory of divine grace be it recorded that the living, life-giving God, to whom all things were known from the beginning, hath so arranged it in his providence that this greatest evil has become the means of the greatest good. The malice of the serpent has manifested the wisdom of God; the depth of the degradation of our race has led to the hope of life and immortality beyond the grave; and had it not been sin, the incarnation of the Son of God, the glories of the cross, the triumphs of grace for ages over the enemies of God and man, the wonders of the coming and kingdom of Christ, would have been unknown to the universe. If sin has abounded, grace hath much more abounded. The eternal love of God to man shines forth with its brightest lustre in the mercy and pardon of the penitent sinner. The death of Christ, and the love of God in Christ, are more than sufficient for the sins of the whole world, or a thousand such worlds, whether *all* the guilty draw from the healing fountain or not. Grace is now seen meeting sin and triumphing over it. We now know both the good and the evil, and are made voluntarily to choose the good and refuse the evil, which is a nobler, higher condition than that of simple goodness, the condition before the fall. When the kingdom comes, and the glorified Bride, by the side of her adorable Lord and Master, shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven, with the glory and majesty of the heavenly state, then shall be fully seen how impotent was the rage of Satan, how completely the sin-spot has been taken away by the atonement of the Saviour, and how wonderfully all the Divine attributes have been harmonized and glorified in the sin-atonement work of the Redeemer.



8thly. It may throw some light on the nature of sin and the consequences that follow it if we glance for a moment at certain *facts* in the history of the Divine administration. Does the Lord our God really hate, and will He finally punish sin? Do not all things continue as they were from the creation of the world? Does the invisible eternal God concern himself with the puny efforts of the human race? Such thoughts are not uncommon, and, when they are long-cherished, they lead to doubts as to the nature of sin on the one hand, or the character of a personal, operative, living God on the other. Both these roots of bitterness have spread themselves widely in the fertile soil of Germany, and it is not uncommon in certain circles to hear sin spoken of as a trifle, and the personality of God denied. Now, to dash this cup of delusion from the lips of men, and to demonstrate that God can, and does, punish sin, I present you with the following historical *facts*, which, while they shew us the terrors of the Lord, are also well calculated to lead us to Christ.

(1) The *fall of the angels* (Jude 6) is a doctrine taught in Scripture, and we are assured that they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. They were high and holy beings: they sinned, and God cast them out of heaven. He positively dethroned the principalities and powers of heaven when they sinned, and they are at this moment in chains, waiting for the judgment-day. God, then, does punish sin, and He can, and He will, punish *you* if ye reject the message of his mercy.

(2) Meditate on the *fall of Adam* for a moment, and see how, for one act of disobedience, he was banished from paradise, and death, the king of terrors, let in among us to desolate the world for so many years. The law of God is of strong unyielding material, and the vengeance threatened against the transgressor must take its course. The sentimentalists may sigh as they please, but death reigns through Adam's sin; and, notwithstanding their fine sayings about the indiscriminating



love of God and the beauty of the Divine character, it will meet them and smite them as well as the others. Now, if the Creator has done this at the beginning, and sees and permits the punishment to continue for so many ages, how can you say that God does not punish? How can you do it—*you*, with the deadly arrow in you which shall finally bring you to the grave?

(3) The next greatest curse of sin, after the fall and kingdom of death which followed it, was the confusion of *tongues* at Babel, from which we are to date the origin of the various languages of the world. Awful was the presumption which led to the building of the tower, and fearful the punishment that followed it. The wide, boundless ocean, when navigation was in its infancy, was never such a separation from mankind as these various languages, to remove which, and reverse, in part at least, the curse of Babel, the pentecostal tongues were given from the ascended Redeemer. Here we see the punishment that followed the heaven-defying apostacy of the Babylonians on the plains of Shinar. Every Missionary feels it; every ambassador to foreign nations knows its bitterness; every attempt to civilize the savage, emancipate the slave, and christianize the world, has to contend with and conquer this universal curse.

(4) But in the range of these historical movements of the Lord's vengeance against iniquity we have passed by the *flood*, which indeed, more than most other judgments, overwhelms the imagination and baffles the powers of thought and description (Gen. vii. and viii.). The sins of the antediluvians are well known, and they are the sins which, from the first to the last, in the person, in the family, in the church, or in the world, lead to the consuming judgments of God. They rejected the Son of God, who, in the person of Noah, by the power of the Spirit, preached to them (1 Pet. iii. 19); and they grieved and resisted the Spirit of God (Gen. vi. 3). These were the two sins which brought Jerusalem and the Jewish nation to destruction. They rejected the love of God in the crucifixion of

the Saviour, and they blasphemed and quenched the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost and afterwards, until the hand of the destroyer was upon them, and their national polity was broken to pieces. And these are the two sins which (Heb. x. 29) land the human soul in the horror of midnight darkness, where all hope is extinguished and nothing remains but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. So the flood came, and swept them all away. And was there no mercy in God? no pity for the crying of infancy or the helplessness of age, for the might of the strong man contending with the waters or the multitudes of maidens sinking in the all-devouring element? Oh, my brother! think not so, but think that God is the Lord, and must be obeyed; that sin is sin, and must be punished? He that shut Noah in the ark, and brought the waters over the world, gave his Son to die for *thee*, and He did *both* to shew *thee*, my brother, and *me*, and the whole creation of God, that sin is the abominable thing which his soul hates; and that, wherever it is found,—in angel, in man, or in devil,—it must be punished, even though races and worlds should perish under the stroke.

(5) Then you may consider for a moment the destruction of the cities of the plain (Gen. xix.), and see if that fearful and fiery judgment of God does not demonstrate his hatred of sin, and the terrible punishment to which the sinner is exposed. Their sins are known, and they are the very crimes under which the East groans at the present day. But is it not a fearful thing to think of, that five cities, full of men, and women, and children, should be burned up, and by a fire rained down upon them by God himself? How shall *we* escape if we neglect the great salvation? How dare we harbour the thought that He is no more a sin-avenger, but a sin-indulger? Hear, ye despisers, and wonder and perish! The God with whom we have to do is the God of law, of righteousness, and judgment, not the God of your imagination and flimsy sentimentality. He creates, He redeems, and He judges. He is known by his acts

of mercy and of power. He announces his *will*, and expects you to obey it ; He proclaims his overtures of mercy, and you have nothing to do but to receive them ; He presents to every perishing sinner the gift of his Son, and he that believeth not shall be condemned.

(6) Jerusalem was his own city : his temple was there ; his solemn worship was there. There were the prophets, priests, and kings of his choice. The Jews were his people, whom He had chosen, led out of Egypt with signs and wonders and an outstretched arm ; for whom He disinherited the nations of Canaan ; to whom He gave the promises ; from whom Jesus Christ, according to the flesh, descended. All these were glorious privileges, yet they all availed nothing when they rejected his Son and quenched his Spirit. He rejected them, banished them, cursed them ; and they are at this day a mockery and a by-word among the nations. He is no sin-indulger. He punished his own Son when sin was laid upon Him ; our sins, my brother, and not his own. It pleased the Lord to bruise him. He hath put Him to grief, and the Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. If you dream, therefore, that, living and dying in your sins, you shall escape the just judgment of God, you are deceiving yourself, and the sooner the fatal delusion is broken the better. Rise up in the name of God, like the prodigal, and come to your Father. You can escape the consequences of sin only through the cross of Christ, for there is no other name given under heaven among men by which they can be saved.

(7). Lastly, I will mention only the closing event of this dispensation, viz. the *coming of the Lord Jesus* in his glory as King and Judge of the whole world. This glorious hope of the faithful church, which he hath purchased with his blood, is the terror, punishment, and destruction of the world. He comes in flaming fire to take vengeance on two classes of men—the *ignorant* and the *disobedient* (2 Thess. i. 8). He comes to separate the righteous from the wicked, and cast the beast

and the false prophet into the lake of fire, who have tortured his saints with such ingenuity for so many years, and filled the earth with such abominable idolatries. He came as the sin-atonement Lamb, and He comes as the sin-avenger. He came in the weakness and frailty of our nature ; He comes in the glory and majesty of God. He came as creation's burden-bearer, to bear our infirmities and carry our sorrows ; He comes as creation's sceptre-bearer, to introduce the everlasting kingdom of righteousness and peace. Grace waits long, but will not bear with men for ever. Two shall be sleeping in the same bed ; one shall be taken and the other left : two shall be walking in the field ; one shall be taken and the other shall be left. The righteous shall be caught up to meet Him in the air, and the wicked given over to the devouring fire. Then commences the great day of God which shall expound all the mysteries of the past ages. But who shall abide the day of his coming, and who shall be able to stand before Him ?

“ Quid sum miser tunc dicturus !  
 Quem patronum rogaturus,  
 Cum nec justus sit securus ?

Rex tremendæ majestatis !  
 Qui salvandos salvas gratis,  
 Salva me, fons pietatis !”

Now I ask you, do not these seven great *facts* illustrate the meaning of ἀμαρτία, *sin*, in our text ? Do they not throw a flood of light on the great question of the day, “ What is sin, and how does God feel towards it ?” Thus we see the word of God and his providence agree, testifying to the fearful nature of sin, and that safety there is none for any of the sons of men, save in the redeeming love of Jesus the Saviour of the world.

9thly. But who are they that deceive themselves regarding sin ? They are two classes—those who think they are without sin by *nature*, and those who think they are entirely rid of it by *grace*. Of the latter class there are but few, I believe, in



our days, except certain individuals among the Methodists and the Papists; and we need not dwell on their delusion, which arises from defective views of sin, and imperfect views with regard to the requirements of the law of God. It does not appear that the apostles and prophets of the Lord claimed sinless perfection, and the Lord's prayer containing the petition, "Forgive us our debts," was intended for all the disciples. The other class of individuals are of varied sentiments, and include some estimable characters, though their religious instincts have become entirely perverted. Some will have it there is no such thing as *sin* in the creation, and, with Lucretius, cry out, "*Timor facit deos*" (Fear makes the gods), and all that we are dreading are only phantoms of the brain, without reality in the nature of things. Many others in this country identify sin with *crime*, and, building on this foundation, would be highly offended with the imputation that they are sinners. This was the sentiment of one of the most educated Jewish ladies I have ever met in Germany. Here, too, the words of the apostle may be properly applied—"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." This leads us to the ninth verse, which contains—

#### B. THE CONFESSION OF SIN, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

It is natural that the apostle should introduce this subject here, for he has shewn us that we can claim nothing on the ground of sinlessness, and, consequently, the only way of getting into fellowship with the God of light and love is by the confession of our sins. Seeing it is undeniable that we *have sin*, the only question is, what are we to do with it? and John tells us, in the words of our text, we are to confess our sins, in order that the faithful and just God may forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

I. The nature of *confession of sins* will require a few words in this place, in order that we may approach the throne of the

heavenly grace with acceptance. We shall not enter into the subjects of controversy on this matter, nor stir up the muddy waters of popish theology concerning the confessional. Our object is not controversy, but truth, and may the God of truth guide us into all truth, through Jesus Christ our Lord !

1st. We confess our sins to *God*. He is the Living Fountain, from whom alone forgiveness flows ; and, like the prodigal, it is natural we should say to Him, “ Father, we have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and are no more worthy to be called thy children.” David, in his sorrow and humiliation, says, “ I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD ; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin (Ps. xxxii. 5). Daniel makes his confession to the Lord, the great and dreadful God, who keepeth the covenant and mercy to them that love Him, and to them that keep his commandments (Dan. ix. 4, 5). So Solomon, Isaiah, and the prophets universally. Jesus teaches us to ask forgiveness from our Father which is in heaven, who has all good things to give unto them that ask Him. There is not a trace in the ancient Jewish church of confession to angels, or to the priests under the law ; not the least trace in the Old and New Testaments of an order of men to whom the human race are bound to confess, and through whom Jehovah has promised to dispense forgiveness to the nations. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. He is ever present with us, and his ears are open to our cries. We know that He is Love, and that He is much more ready to forgive and bless than we are to ask Him. He has given us many precious promises and invitations to encourage us in approaching his heavenly throne, so that by grace we are emboldened to ask and receive, that our joy may be full. Sin is directed against Him as the Creator and Governor of the universe, and, as such, He is the proper person to forgive it.

2dly. But we confess our sins in the *name of Christ* his Son, our Saviour (John xvi. 23. xiv. 13. xv. 16). He is the Me-

diator appointed by God through whom the sinner is permitted to approach Him, and He has given us the assurance that those who come through Him shall not be rejected. This doctrine of Mediation is the great peculiarity of the Christian system, and it furnishes the central point of the revelation of God in the New Testament. Thus the great key-stone in the Christian's temple of living faith is the *Mediator*, in whom so many names, offices, and attributes are united; in whom all varieties are harmonized, all types fulfilled, and all the symbolism of the former times expounded: the true and unchangeable Θεάνθρωπος, (Gottmensch), the God-Man, in whom alone the fallen creation can have access unto God. In this glorious Mediator we have all that the longing soul can desire—love united with infinite power, majesty tempered with mercy and grace. He possesses our nature, and knows our frame; so that we may approach Him with all confidence as our kinsman-Redeemer, from whom we have no reason to dread a repulse or a refusal.

“To human weakness not severe  
Is our High Priest above;  
His heart o'erflows with tenderness,  
His bowels melt with love.”

We have no name in heaven or on the earth save his, nor any merits save his blood and righteousness, in which we dare appear before the Creator of the universe, either to confess our sins or to plead the fulfilment of his covenant-promises (Heb. vii. 25. Rom. viii. 34. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. ix. 24). We confess our sins, therefore, in the name of Christ; we take refuge in his everlasting fulness when we approach the throne of the heavenly majesty.

3dly. This confession of sin it is manifest must be free, full, and *unreserved*. It were a mockery of the holy God to confess before Him a part of our offences, reserving for further use and occupancy the profitable sins which are dear to us as the right hand and the right eye, or the bosom idols which we are

unwilling to give up to destruction. Undoubtedly, if you come with reserve before God you will derive little benefit from the pretended confession of sin; yea, instead of pardon, and peace of conscience, and joy unspeakable, your conscience will become harder, sin will gain a greater tyranny over you, and the horror of thick darkness will settle down upon your soul, until the lamp of hope becomes extinguished and the harbingers of eternal death come in. God is not mocked; and as the end of confession is not to get clear scores in order that we may have liberty to begin the work of transgression anew, but to get rid of sin, and the love of sin in our bosoms—to get the temple purged and purified, that the presence of the holy God may fill and satisfy us for ever; so it is necessary that we *begin* with the idols that are dear to us and slay them first,—the right hands and the right eyes that are the main offenders,—in order to shew that we are in earnest in the matter, and that all sin is our abhorrence, even as holiness is the desire of our hearts.

“The dearest idol I have known,  
Whate’er that idol be,  
Help me to tear it from thy throne,  
And worship only Thee.”

4thly. The confession of sin, which is followed by the forgiving love of God, and the sweet assurance of that love in our souls, must be in *deep sorrow* for having sinned, and in the full resolution, by God’s grace, to sin no more. Peter went out and wept bitterly for having denied his Master. David shews the true spirit of a penitent in his wonderful confession in the fifty-first Psalm, which may be recommended as a noble example to all that feel burdened with sin, and desire to confess it. Our minds ought to be filled with deep feelings of the hateful nature of sin, and its bitter consequences, of our guilt and unworthiness in the sight of a holy God, as well as with adoring views of the character of God in the person of Jesus the Mediator, who admits us to the Divine presence to receive, for his Son’s sake, the forgiveness of our sins. Indeed, godly



sorrow is no small part of the divine life in the soul of man generally, and in the solemn act of confession it ought to be the prevailing feeling of our souls. Jesus was the man of sorrows.

“A pilgrim through this lonely world  
The blessed Saviour past;  
A mourner all his life was He,  
A dying Lamb at last.”

If we have imbibed the Spirit of our Master we shall see enough in ourselves, in the church, and in the world, when we are about to confess sin, or when we have received the forgiveness of it.

“We weep for those that weep below,  
And, burdened, for the afflicted sigh;  
The various forms of human woe  
Excite our softest sympathy,  
Fill every heart with mournful care,  
And draw out all our souls in prayer.”

5thly. All that I have said relates to the confession of our own *personal* sins, but our confessions should extend to a much wider circle than that. If you recognise the voice of Jesus in the Psalms, you will see how he identifies Himself with his people, and makes all their sins and sorrows his own, in the solemn acts of confession. We ought to do the same. We should feel ourselves members of a fallen race, and, like Daniel, confess the public sins of the nations, the churches, and the world. We should feel the dishonour cast upon the holy name of God by sin, whoever commits it, being less joyful that we did it not, than sorrowful that it was done at all. The evil is, that the name and glory of God is tarnished by sin, the source from whence the sin proceeds being of minor consequence. In proportion, therefore, as we have attained to the mind of God over sin, and righteousness, and judgment, will we be led, like Jesus, to feel all sin as our own, being committed against the Father of Mercies, whom we love and adore as our God and Father. What is done against the God whom we

love, and the Redeemer who died for us on the cross, can never be indifferent to us, if we know what our relations to Jehovah really are. As members of the Son of God, we feel that his life flows in us, and, having in some measure the same mind that was in Him, we can never, in so far as we are one with Him, do any thing but grieve over that which He lived and died to destroy. It is quite natural, therefore, that in our private and public confessions we should be drawn out from our own personal sins to the confession of sins in a more general way; and indeed this is the case in all the formularies of the various churches of Christ throughout the world.

II. THE CONSEQUENCES of this confession are twofold—*forgiveness* and *purification*, and to each of these we must now turn our attention.

1st. God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins when we confess them in the name, and as the disciples, of Christ. This is a remarkable sentence, and opens up to us something of the infinite mercy and compassion of God. πιστός, like אֱמִינָה and נֶאֱמָן, (Deut. xxxii. 4. vii. 9. the LXX. has πιστός), when applied to God, refers to his faithfulness in keeping his promises (1 Cor. i. 9. x. 13. 1 Thess. v. 24. 2 Thess. iii. 3. Heb. x. 23. xi. 11); so of Christ (2 Tim. ii. 13). This word, then, πιστός, refers to Jehovah as an unchangeably true and covenant-keeping God, and in this character the saints have ever rejoiced to contemplate Him. There is nothing so sure as a word from his lips. Abraham had nothing but a word of God to trust to when he left his country and his father's house to become a pilgrim in a strange land; the children of Israel had nothing to sustain them in their long bondage and grinding oppression in Egypt save a word of God; and what was it, save the divine promise of the woman's seed given in Paradise, which for so many ages kept the star of hope shining over our sin-stricken world? Yea, the heavens and the earth have no other foundation to rest on, no other guarantee

for the future, save the word of the Lord (2 Pet. iii. 4—14). This, then, is the first great idea in the mind of the humble penitent, that God *keeps his word*, and having promised to forgive the sins of his people, He does forgive them, and we *are forgiven*. *Δίκαιος*, צַדִּיק, refers to God as a just, righteous, and impartial Judge, who administers justice according to truth (2 Tim. iv. 8. Rev. xvi. 5. John v. 30. vii. 24. Luke xii. 57. 2 Thess. i. 5, 6). In our passage it can be applied to God only on the ground of the work of Jesus Christ for the vindicating the law and expiating the sins of the world. This is the exposition of the reformers of the church, and we hold it to be the only true one. Grotius and others find a difficulty in the text, because they do not admit the doctrine of the satisfaction of Christ, and so they must resolve the difficulty with great show of learning. Grotius says *δίκαιος*, like צַדִּיק, may sometimes have the meaning *bonus, lenis* (good, kind), and such it should be translated here, and to him Lücke has given a sufficient answer. Lücke mentions at great length that *δίκαιος* here must have its natural original meaning, *just, righteous*; but then he explains it away by making it synonymous with *πιστός*, and this shift he is compelled to resort to from his miserable theory that John *never teaches* the doctrine of expiation through the death of Christ. But the theory is false and pernicious (1 John ii. 2. i. 7. iii. 16. iv. 9, 10. Rev. i. 5. v. 9, 10. vi. 9. xi. 9, 11. xiv. 6). In the gospel he teaches the same glorious truth, notwithstanding the flippant unproved assertion that such a doctrine is foreign to the mind of the apostle. But the doctrine of the atoning death of Christ might be quite true, even if one of the apostles did not teach it; and of all theories of interpretation, the most miserable is that of setting up one apostle against another, as if they had differed essentially on the subject of the person and work of Jesus Christ. But what is the evidence that *πιστός* and *δίκαιος* are synonymous? There is none—not a text given; and the only reason is, that Dr. Lücke thinks so, and thinks so because the satisfaction of Christ is not

*clearly* taught anywhere in the Bible, and in the writings of John it is not taught *at all*. What is there to prevent us from saying "God is faithful in forgiving our sins because He has promised to do so, and He is even just in doing so, for Jesus the Mediator has atoned for our guilt." But leaving the partialities of critics, let us attend to the glorious truth of the text, viz. that when we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive them. Most glorious truth this. Have I the right, then, when I kneel down and confess my sins before God, to rise from my knees believing them to be forgiven? That is precisely your duty and your privilege, and if you do not believe so, you must throw suspicion either on your own confession or on the faithfulness of God. If you know that you have really confessed your sins, this text is your divine warrant for believing them forgiven. But I have not the joy which is the portion of those whose sins are forgiven. I reply, Joy may or may not be the portion of God's people. Forgiveness is one thing, and the sense of forgiveness is another; and though they should always meet, yet are they often separated. Besides, perhaps your want of spiritual joy arises from the fact, that, though having confessed your sins, you do not, according to this passage, believe them *to be forgiven*; you distrust and deny the faithfulness of God. Every man who really confesses sin has the right to believe it forgiven; and if he does not do so, his coldness and deadness must be attributed to his own unbelief.

2dly. The apostle adds, "And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Forgiveness is not the end, but the beginning of our course, and sanctification proceeds on the ground that we are in a forgiven state. Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, we are justified freely by his grace, and placed in the position where sanctification begins. So, in the believer's life, every act of penitential confession leads us into deeper and holier longings after sanctification. He that forgives the transgressions sanctifies the fountain from which they flow. The Son to



expiate our sins, and the Holy Spirit to prepare us for glory are the two great gifts of God to man. Forgiveness removes from above us the flaming sword of justice that threatened to devour us, and this purging from all sins fits us for the inheritance of the saints in light. Pardon and purification go hand-in-hand with us through our earthly pilgrimage; so that if any one boasts of being in the state of free and full forgiveness while yet there is no mighty process of heart-purification going on, that man is a deceiver, and the truth is not in him. As to means, God uses in providence and in grace whatever He pleases, to accomplish the work of sanctification. The reading of his word, the preaching of the Gospel, the ordinances of the church commonly called means of grace, are his ordinary means of deepening in our souls the assurances of his love; but the Holy Spirit is free, and He has not bound Himself absolutely to any system of ordinances, nor should we seek to limit his ministrations to certain times, places, persons, or observances. Let us use all the means God has put within our reach for the purifying of the soul, and in doing so we are giving the best proof to the church and the world that our sins are forgiven.

“O for a heart to praise my God,  
A heart from guilt set free;  
A heart that’s sprinkled with the blood  
So freely shed for me.

A heart in every thought renewed,  
And full of love divine;  
Perfect, and right, and pure, and good,  
A copy, Lord, of thine!”

### C. THE MAKING GOD A LIAR.

How does our saying that we have not sinned make God a liar? It gives the lie direct to the whole work of God in the plan of salvation. God testifies that he sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world from the guilt and bondage of sin, and we

seek to make it false and vain by asserting that we were never in a state of danger and guilt at all. To meet this assertion of the enemy, we assert the universal sinfulness of man ; and on this subject I refer to what has been said on the eighth verse where the subject is first introduced by the apostle.

I. There were very various notions, both among the Jews and Gentiles, on the subject of sin, and to these the apostle probably alludes in this verse. Many of the Jewish Rabbis maintained that they were able to live in a state of sinless perfection as respects God ; and at the present day, in the East at least, they do the same, though Maimonides was of a different opinion, and rebukes very sharply such presumption. Such vain deceivers may have been in the mind of the apostle when he wrote this epistle. It is probable, too, that the elements of the Gnostic speculations had been working in the minds of certain parties when John wrote, and especially the dogma of the *sinfulness of matter*, and, as a necessary consequence of it, that the incarnation of Christ was not real, and the body which He assumed not the material corruptible body of man ; and hence the earnestness and fulness with which the apostle, both in the gospel and our epistle, insists on the true and proper humanity of the Redeemer (1 John i. 1, 2). Directly opposed to these Gnostic delusions was the rabbinical doctrine of sinless perfection, and the apostle contradicts it also ; so that the conclusions to be drawn from his statements are, that human nature is indeed sinful, universally sinful, but not essentially sinful, and consequently capable of redemption, sanctification, and eternal life.

II. Of whom does the apostle speak ? Grotius and others, building on the absolute sense of the perfect tense, *ἡμαρτήκαμεν*, refers it to the state of heathenism in which they formerly lived, and this may be admitted if it is not intended thereby to deny the present sinfulness of those to whom he wrote, which is absolutely asserted, and in the present tense, in the eighth

verse. The object of the apostle is not to distinguish the Christian from the heathen state; nor to assert that before conversion they lived grievous sins — “*gravibus peccatis vixisse*,” as Grotius says; nor yet to assert that absolute holiness in the present state is impossible; but to maintain the sinfulness of man, and thus justify the interference of God in the work of redemption through Jesus Christ. We are sinful hell-deserving creatures, and whoever denies it, *ποιερ αὐτὸν ψεύστην*, makes Him a liar, for the doctrines of the gospel, the promises and threatenings of the former dispensation, the mission of his Son into our world, and the expiatory sacrifice of the cross, are all based on the principle of the sinfulness of man. Deny that, and you must deny these also: is it false, so they must be false also: and all that is announced about grace, and redeeming love, and the coming of Christ, must be lies and delusions.

III. That any should assert, either that they have no sin, or that they have never sinned, can arise only from the most imperfect or perverted notions of God and his creatures. When we cast a glance over the families and kingdoms of the nations, we may soon convince ourselves of the universal prevalence of sin; and if we have any correct views of the nature and love of God we must come to the conclusion that sin is exceeding heinous and hateful in his sight. They must be ignorant persons who make this assertion: they are deceived, or they are deceivers, and the effect of their deceptions would be to destroy the foundations of the gospel of Christ. The form of expression, “make God a liar,” is remarkable, and is intended by the apostle to intensify our abhorrence of the delusions which would nullify the gospel of Christ. The lie (*ψεῦδος*) is the root of all our evils. It is the main cause of the present evils that oppress humanity, and, of all sins, it is held among men to be the most heinous and unforgiveable. Two men

give each other the lie, and you have a duel ; two mobs contradict each other, and you have a riot ; two nations give each other the lie, and you have war ; the word of Satan gave the lie to the word of God, and we had the fall of man. Thus Satan is the father of lies, and by means of his lies, like a subtle and corroding poison spreading through the life-blood of the body corporate, he continues to deceive the nations, and subject so many millions of our race to his dark dominion. To make God a liar is to attribute to Him the character and work of Satan. The lie (ψεῦδος, שקר) among the Hebrews denoted also *idolatry*, as opposed to the worship and service of the God of truth (Jer. iii. 10. xiii. 25), and by denying the sinfulness of man and the redemption through the Divine Mediator, you reduce Christianity to the rank of one religion among many, instead of being the only true religion ; you make it, in fact, a *mythology*, like that of Greece and Rome, as Strauss and his followers in Germany did, while yet they bore its name and submitted to its ordinances. Hence the apostle concludes, "His word is not in them." The word λόγος has the same signification as truth, (ἀλήθεια) in verse 8, and is the same as the word of truth (λόγος ἀληθείας) (Eph. i. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 15), and means that they have neither part nor lot in the glorious Gospel of the blessed God. The Gospel is the manifestation of the personal Logos as the Redeemer and King of the creation, and the Scriptures which contain it are the *word of truth*. Satan's lie and God's truth are contrasted ; the kingdom of darkness and the kingdom of light ; the liar from the beginning, and his lies, with Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life. God grant that his truth may be in us ! Lord, enable us to walk in the truth of thy holy Gospel for evermore ! Amen.

"Great God, with wonder and with praise  
On all thy works we look ;  
But still thy wisdom, power, and grace,  
Shine brightest in thy book.



Here are thy choicest treasures hid ;  
Here our best comfort lies ;  
Here our desires are satisfied ;  
And here our hopes arise.

Lord, make us understand thy law ;  
Shew what our faults have been ;  
And from thy Gospel let us draw  
Pardon for all our sins."

## CHAPTER IV.

Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν, ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτητε· καὶ ἐάν τις ἀμάρτη, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον.

Καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστι περὶ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν· οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου.

Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτὸν, ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν.

Ὁ λέγων, ἔγνωκα αὐτὸν, καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν, ψεύστης ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν.

Ὁς δ' ἂν τηρῇ αὐτοῦ τὸν λόγον, ἀληθῶς ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ τετελείεται. Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσμεν.

Ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν, ὀφείλει, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιεπάτησε, καὶ αὐτὸς οὕτως περιπατεῖν.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous :

And he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected : hereby know we that we are in him.

He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

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THE connection between the first and the second chapter seems to be this:—I have taught you something of the nature and universality of sin, and of the deceivers and hypocrites who say they have no sin; but you are not to understand me as teaching that sin is an element of our being, or attached to us by any absolute necessity, or infused into us by the will or authority of the Deity, or of such might and dominion that resistance is vain and impossible: on the contrary, the main object of my epistle lies in the three words, ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε, *that ye sin not*. This is the bent of my heart and the end of all my labours as an apostle of Jesus Christ the divine Redeemer. Ye are not to yield to sin, but to resist it to the uttermost, in the assurance that the grace of Christ will be sufficient for you, and that every fresh victory over it will prepare the way for new conquests, until the old man be thoroughly crucified, and every thought brought into subjection to the gospel of Christ. The main subjects in the first verse are,

A. Τὰ τέκνία and ὁ παράκλητος, "THE CHILDREN AND THE ADVOCATE."

These two glorious themes the apostle joins together, as being the natural connection which occurred to his tender and loving mind. The whole family of God rises up in his mind, and, along with them, the great idea of the divine Mediator, to whom they owe their return to the Father's bosom, and all the glories of the heavenly mansions.

I. The word τέκνία, "little children," is a favourite with the Apostle John, and is found in the following passages: John xiii. 33. 1 John ii. 1, 12, 28. iii. 7, 18. iv. 4. v. 21. It is used by no other apostle save Paul, and that only once (Gal. iv. 19), when he is speaking of the tempted Galatian converts, of whom he says, "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." The word is a diminutive from τέκνον; and we, having no principle in our language for forming diminutives, or perhaps having lost it, must translate by the two words "little children." The Latins say, "Filioli;" the Germans, "Kindlein;" the Italians, "Filioletti;" the French are as poor as ourselves in this respect, and must say "Mes petits enfans." Such forms of expression, in all languages, denote endearment and affection. They are the natural expressions of the heart when it breathes over its objects in the suffusion of melting tenderness. If we ask the question, How comes it that diminutives denote affection? I answer, all the most valuable articles in *nature* are small—the iron, the lead, the silver, the gold, the diamonds of the mine, are all diminutives, compared with the rocks, the mountains, and the strata of the globe. It has become a proverb among us that "valuable goods come in small bundles." It is so in *grace*, also, for the church of the Son of God, though forming an innumerable company in the heavenly Jerusalem, yet, when compared with the millions of mankind who live and die in their sins, they are μικρὸν ποίμνιον (Luke xii. 32), "a little flock;" but in them, and with them, are found all the riches of Jeho-



vah's mercy, all the wondrous manifestations of his love, all the glories of the eternal kingdom. This, then, is the origin of the lingual principle, that diminutives denote affection.

1st. The *name*, therefore, refers to the believer as an object of special and tender care, and includes such ideas as the following:—Ye are the children of my warmest affection and love, over whom I long and rejoice continually. Ye are separated from the world as a little band of believing, loving children of God; but ye are of more value in the sight of God, and angels, and all holy creatures, than the great world, with its pomps and vanities, which are all destined to perish and be forgotten. Ye are helpless, weak, and dependent, as little children, and like them, too, ye have received with meekness the engrafted word. Your food is the sincere milk of the word of God. Your faith, love, holiness, and obedience have the simplicity and honesty of little children, and therefore I call you *τεκνία μου*, “my little children.”

2dly. The *purpose* of my writing you is, *that ye sin not*. Ye are not the slaves of sin any more, but the freemen of the Lord Jesus, and over your blood-bought consciences sin and Satan should and shall have no more dominion. Remember that sin is opposed to the being, attributes, law, and government of the holy *God*, and as you love and serve Him, you should, in the same proportion, hate and resist *it*. He has given you power to conquer its inveteracy, and He holds you responsible for a life of purity and virtue. The bondage of the flesh is broken, the yoke of Satan's tyranny oppresses you no more, and in the hopes of life and immortality the false glare of worldly ambition is extinguished for ever. Remember, also, that Jesus, your adorable Redeemer, has died to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, so that your love to Him should impel you to walk in the paths of holiness; and, in addition to all this, sin is your own greatest enemy, and will certainly, if yielded to, bring down upon you the vengeance of God. It brought the angels out of heaven; it drove Adam out of Para-

dise; it brought the judgment of the flood over the ancient world; it brought fire and brimstone upon the cities of the plain, it dispersed the ancient people of God to the four winds of heaven; and it will bring down the Son of God from the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, in flaming fire, with his mighty angels, to take vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of Christ (2 Thes. i. 8). This, then, is your mortal enemy, and to guard you and warn you against it, as dear children, I write you these things.

3dly. I take the *ταῦτα*, *these things*, to refer generally to the substance of the whole epistle, but more especially to the first chapter; and hence we may learn what, in the mind of the apostle, are the best *preventatives* against sin. "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not." What are these things? The eternal glory of the Logos, his incarnation for the redemption of the world, the fellowship of the saints with God, the character of the great Jehovah as the God of light and love, the believer's walk in the light of the Gospel, the sin-cleansing power of the blood of Jesus Christ,—these are the substance of the first chapter, and to these the apostle refers when he says, "These things write I unto you, that ye sin not." The apostle does not consider the "Be good, and go to heaven," which virtuous heathens and Christians unite to recommend, as any sufficient *preventative* against the power and deceitfulness of sin. On the contrary, he opens up the character of God, and leads men to the cross of the Redeemer, in order to find motives and principles that can fortify the soul against the assaults of the devil. These *ταῦτα* are the things that can keep you from sin, and in proportion as they escape from your mind and memory you become ensnared in the entanglements of the world, and the flesh, and the devil. The most practical kind of preaching, therefore, is, like John and Paul, to open up to the people the doctrines of the Gospel, the mystery of the Trinity, the redeeming love of Christ, the work and indwelling of the Holy Ghost the Comforter. The preventatives are not in us,

but in God. The motives that can avail to stem the corruptions of our own nature within and the surging waves of worldliness without us, and, like a warrior's shield, quench all the fiery darts of the wicked, must be very different indeed from the timorous whispers about duty and virtue which you hear from the lips of moralists and enthusiasts. We find in Jesus Christ, and Him crucified, the power of God unto salvation; and till the soul of man be attracted to his glorious person and work, his best resolutions and noblest efforts after holiness are like the morning cloud and the early dew.

II. Jesus, ὁ παράκλητος, the "Advocate," is now brought before the mind of the children of God as the one all-sufficient fountain of forgiveness for the transgressions of mankind—"And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Some think that the apostle, in using ἔχομεν, and not ἔχει, *we have*, and not *He has*, refers to an important distinction between the *sinner* and those who are to intercede for him. Grotius says, "Non dicit, habet *ille* advocatum sed ecclesia habet, quæ pro lapso precatur. Preces autem ecclesiæ Christus more advocati deo patri commendat." But this distinction is finical, and does not flow naturally from the apostle's words. The meaning is, "If any of you sin, remember, we Christians have an Advocate, and your duty is to go to Him." Can any thing be more natural? Besides, where is it taught that the fallen sinner should not, or dare not, himself go to the Advocate? Where is it hinted, in the whole Bible, that the church is the mediator between the fallen Christian and the Saviour? It is possible the Papists may hold this opinion, but it is neither orthodox nor scriptural. But let us attend to the meaning of the apostle.

1st. The word παράκλητος is peculiar to the apostle John, who uses it in the following passages: John xiv. 16, 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7. 1 John ii. 1; in all which, save our present text, it is applied to the Holy Spirit, and translated *Comforter*. So the



LXX use it for מְנַחֵם (Job xvi. 2), in the sense of Comforter. As applied to the ascended Redeemer it answers to the Hebrew מְלִיצ, interpreter, or מַלְאָךְ, the angel of intercession, who appears in the divine presence for his people. On the glorious intercession of the Saviour in heaven, consult the following passages, which are all substantially the same as our text: Rom. viii. 34. 1 Tim. ii. 5. Heb. vii. 25. ix. 24. These passages, when carefully meditated upon, will give you a glance into the glories of the upper sanctuary, and the work which the Son of God is accomplishing there. He is the Paraclete to prepare the mansions in the skies, and the Holy Spirit is the Paraclete to prepare the people of God for these heavenly abodes. Jesus is the Paraclete in the heavens before the throne, and the Spirit is the Paraclete in the bosom of the church on earth. Jesus, the Lamb as it had been slain (Rev. v. 6), presents, as the High Priest and Mediator of the church, the merits of his blood and righteousness on our behalf; and the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, helpeth our infirmities, and maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. viii. 26).

2dly. Now the *purpose* which John refers to in the advocacy above is the *forgiveness of sins*, which, in every way, is to be associated with the Son of God as its procuring cause, and never with the Holy Spirit. The work of Christ is twofold—atonement and intercession, an earthly and a heavenly work. His finished work on Calvary is held up to the world of unbelieving men as the only ground of their acceptance with God; and when they believe in his atoning love their sins are blotted out for his name sake. They are justified freely by grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. They are now incorporated into the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, and their final salvation is made sure by the promises of God. But they are still in the flesh, and compassed about with infirmities, and hence the need of an intercessor in the skies. We present the atonement of Christ to the



unbeliever as the source of justifying grace ; and we present the intercession of Christ to the believer as the source of his restoration and strength after he has fallen from his stedfastness. The church is brought into existence by the atonement, and its perpetuity is guaranteed by the continual intercession of Christ. Let, therefore, the unbeliever, under the oppression of his guilt, betake himself to the cross, where the fountains of redeeming mercy flow ; and let the believer, who is justified by grace, but still oppressed with the law of sin and death working in his members, and often overcoming him, betake himself to the heavenly Intercessor, in whom he will find sympathy for his weakness, restoration again to the sense of the divine favour, and grace to help in every time of need.

3dly. Let us contemplate the *person* and *name* of this heavenly Advocate, as he is presented to us by the apostle—*Jesus Christ the righteous*. It is remarkable, and quite characteristic of the spirit of love which pervades this epistle, that John never uses *Κυρίος*, Lord, as a name of Christ. On other occasions he does, and the common New-Testament name of the Redeemer is the *Lord Jesus Christ*. But *Lord* is the name of majesty, power, and dominion, and, though suiting well the glorious descriptions of the Mediator elsewhere, would not have been altogether in keeping with the breathings of divine love that flow through our epistle, and John does not use it. But our advocate is *Jesus*. This is the name which connects Him with us ; the name of his weakness and sorrow, or, as we would call it, his personal baptismal name, which distinguished Him from other men. As the Son of Man, born among the children of men, He has also a *human* name, and He is called *Jesus*. This, therefore, is the name which unites Him with *us*, and therefore, in all languages where the Gospel is known, it is reckoned the sweetest of all his names.

“ How sweet the name of Jesus sounds  
In a believer's ear !

It soothes his sorrows, heals his wounds,  
And drives away his fear.”

This name answers the purpose of the apostle well, and we find it no less than twelve times in this epistle. *Christ* anointed is the official name of the God-man Mediator, and represents the Redeemer as the fountain-head of Jehovah's fulness of grace and -mercy to mankind, the centre of the divine manifestations from the beginning. It expresses admirably the apostle's views of the person of the Redeemer as the fountain of the heavenly unction (χαρίσματα, 1 John ii. 20, 27), and we find it in our epistle ten times. He is also called *the Righteous*, δίκαιος (1 Pet. iii. 18. Acts vii. 52). The apostle might, no doubt, have used the article, and written ὁ δίκαιος, and one would have expected him to do so; but to refer δίκαιος on this account to παράκλητον, as many do, or to translate it where it stands by "a righteous person," as Bishop Middleton proposes to do, is to sacrifice the meaning of a passage to the consistency of a theory. The article was not *necessary* before δίκαιον in this place, because Jesus was known and familiarly thought of as "the Just;" and thus the general became gradually limited to a *personal* designation. It is ever so with the word *Christ*, which, in the New Testament, is used almost indifferently with and without the article. But, secondly, the *position* of δίκαιον limits and defines it, inasmuch as it is joined to the two known and definite nouns Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν, "Jesus Christ." And, lastly, the *meaning* of the passage requires it to be taken in a definite sense. As to the word δίκαιος, it signifies *just*, *impartial*, *righteous*, and is often applied to God as the Judge and Governor of the nations (2 Tim. iv. 8. Rev. xvi. 5. John v. 30). It is found in the LXX. for אֱמֵת (Jer. xlii. 5. Ezek. xviii. 8), and for צַדִּיק (Ps. vii. 12. cxix. 137). The word, as applied to our Lord, represents Him as the Righteous One, in whom we have righteousness and strength. He is the fountain of righteousness for the whole church, and in the act of believing his merits are imputed to us. From Him, the Righteous One, we receive the wedding-robe of righteousness, in which we can appear before the presence of God.

“ Jesus, thy blood and righteousness  
 My beauty are, my glorious dress ;  
 Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
 With joy shall I lift up my head.”

4thly. Such, then, is the name of our glorious Advocate in heaven, and such is his office within the veil; and surely from both we may drink in strong *consolation*, who have fled for refuge to the hope set before us. We have a friend in heaven who has lost none of his human-heartedness, though exalted to the throne of universal dominion; the same as when He wept at the grave of Lazarus, or spake comfort to the widows and friendless on earth, though surrounded with the glories of the godhead, and saluted with the hallelujahs of the blest.

“ Our fellow-sufferer yet retains  
 A fellow-feeling of our pains,  
 And still remembers in the skies  
 His tears, his agonies, and cries.”

This is indeed comfort, and should dry our eyes in the midst of all the storms and struggles of this weary life. He is gone before us to prepare the mansions and open up the way; and therefore, looking unto Him as the author and finisher of our faith, let us, as good soldiers of the cross, follow Him through good report and bad report, until the gates of the New Jerusalem close over us, and death be swallowed up in victory.

#### B. JESUS THE *ἱλασμός*, “OR PROPITIATION.”

The word *ἱλασμός* is found in the New Testament only here and 1 John iv. 10, but its signification is perfectly well known, both from its root and from its cognate derivatives. It signifies propitiation, or sacrifice for sin. Thus the LXX use it for חַטָּאת, (the sin of Samaria, viz. sin-offering, exactly as *περὶ ἁμαρτίας*, Rom. viii. 3, means *by a sacrifice for sin*,) “a sin-offering,” (Amos viii. 14; for חַטָּאת, “a sin-sacrifice” (Ezek. xlv. 27); for כִּפּוּרִים, “propitiations” (Numb. v. 8); and for סְלִיחָה,

“forgiveness” (Ps.cxxx.4). We draw the conclusion, therefore, that the Apostle John, in this passage as in many others, joins the other apostles in asserting the atonement of Jesus Christ for the sins of mankind.

I. Then it is a *fact*, that the eternal mercy has reached us in the person of our adorable Redeemer, and that in the shedding of his blood we have the means and the seal of peace with God. He is *ὁ ἱλασμός*, the Propitiation or Sacrifice for sin, which was promised from the beginning, to finish transgression, make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the most holy (Dan. ix. 24). This, then, shews the value of the *cross*, and explains the extacy and fervour with which the apostles speak of the dying love of Christ; for if it be true that in Golgotha there has been opened a fountain of mercy for the sins of the world, then verily the dying of the Son of God becomes the centre of the divine manifestations, and the doctrine of the cross inconceivably important to us. There the sinner can find forgiveness, the very thing he most longs for, and without which all else is nothing. There the weary finds rest, the wanderer a home, the prodigal his father, and the guilty, fallen creation its God. Then, indeed, the cross, and the crown of thorns, and the cruel mockery of men, received an importance and a meaning which can be read with equal clearness in the pains of hell and the glories of heaven.

“O Haupt, vor dem sich Alles bückt,  
Was Erd' und Himmel in sich hegt!  
Wirst du mit scharfem Dorn gedrückt  
Wie, dass mein König diess erträgt?  
O Haupt, vor dem die Cherubinen  
In Demuth stets verhüllet stehn,  
Und dem die höchsten Thronen dienen!  
Lässest du dich yetzt in Dornen sehn?”

Yes, O Lamb of God and Saviour of the world, we see in



Thee the fountain of life. In thy wounds, and in thy cross, and in thy holy death, we take refuge from the wrath and curse due to our sins. Thou art our propitiation, and for time and eternity we will rest upon Thee alone.

II. But it is asserted that He is the propitiation for *our* sins, and not for *our's* only, but also for the sins of the whole world. The *our* may possibly refer to the Jews, and in that case the whole world would mean the *Gentiles*; but this is quite improbable: the parties are not Jews and Gentiles, but *Christians* and *heathens*. He died for us who believe on his name, and He died for the whole unbelieving world. Not for us who are brought to the knowledge of the truth alone, but for others who are far off, and in the guilt and pollution of sin.

1st, Then, let us consider the truth contained in the first proposition—"He died for our sins." This is for us the most important of all truths, and till we are persuaded of it there can be neither rest nor joy for us here or hereafter. He is *ἰλασμός περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν*: he is the propitiation for our sins. In the fullest, freest, and most admirable manner, He has removed every barrier between us and God; and expiated for ever all our past, present, and future sins, so that we shall never perish, nor shall any be able to pluck us out of his hand. In this sense we are to read all the passages concerning the death of Christ which seem to limit it to the church. The husband hath loved the bride, and given himself for her (Eph. v. 25). The head has drawn to himself the members which he has purchased with his own blood, and he shall preserve them unto his heavenly kingdom (Acts xx. 28). There are many passages which speak the same sentiment, and identify the dying love of Christ with the elect, and in all these passages a limitation is necessary, in order to be in keeping with the purpose of God, which is, not the salvation of all mankind, but a part of mankind only, viz. all that believe on his Son Jesus Christ. There is a number of noisy wranglers in the Christian

church, who, fixing their eyes on certain broad and noble statements of God's universal love, and of the universal extent of the atonement of Christ, will see nothing else, hear nothing else: they see breadth only, and not length. The *universal* love they realize, but the *eternal* love of God they cannot endure: *redemption* is with them every thing, *election* is nothing; or, indeed, worse than nothing, viz. a nuisance, though the entire Scripture is full of it, and the idea of a *sovereign*, decreeing, creating, ruling, ordering God is the all-pervading spirit of the Old and the New Testaments: and I venture to make the broad assertion, that election is the basis of a church, as predestination is the basis of a Providence, without which the very notion of a church or a Providence is impossible and inconceivable. Now I maintain that the idea of an ancient love (if eternal, so much the better), fixed upon its objects, and cleaving to them in all possible conditions, surmounting all difficulties, triumphing over all their stubbornness and opposition, and finally conquering them and bringing them to eternal glory, is a nobler and more glorious aspect of the divine character, and more worthy of the being and attributes of God, than the mere universality of an ineffectual affection, which leaves many, or most of its objects to perish in the end. We measure an affection by the length of its continuance, by the obstacles it surmounts, by the sufferings it endures, and by the honour and dignity which it confers upon its object. If we look at the love of God to his church in this light, there is nothing in heaven or on earth so attractive. It is eternal, it is effectual, and it crowns them with glory and immortality in the skies. So much on the love of Christ to the church.

2dly. But it is said, "He is the propitiation for *the sins* of the whole world." Does, then, the whole world here only mean the elect? Never, in the whole book of God. Election is inconsistent with the idea of universality. The *world*, and the *whole world*, mean either all mankind, or, as distinguished from the believing people of God, the wicked unbelieving part of man-

kind (John xiii. 31. 1 Cor. i. 20. iii. 19. Gal. iv. 3. Col. ii. 8). Do you, then, contradict your Calvinism, and believe that Christ really died for all mankind? Hear what Calvin says on the subject (Rom. v. 18) in his noble Commentary—"Communem omnium gratiam facit, quia omnibus exposita est, non quod ad omnes extendatur re ipsa; nam etsi passus est Christus pro peccatis totius mundi, atque omnibus indifferenter Dei benignitate offeratur; non tamen omnes apprehendunt." So, then, even Calvin asserts that Christ died for the sins of the whole world, and, through the goodness of God, is offered equally to all. Is there, then, no difference between Calvinists and Arminians on this subject? How far do they agree on this important doctrine, and wherein do they differ? Do you believe that all men reap many precious privileges and advantages from the death of Christ? So do I, and all Calvinists. Do you believe his death is a *sufficient* ransom for the sins of all men? So, verily, do we; sufficient, and more than sufficient, for the sins of the world. Do you believe that Christ *so* died for all men, that all may come to Him and be saved if *they will*? Then I believe the same, with the important addition, too, that in his death He has effected the certain salvation of *some*. Do you believe that He has so died for all, that, believing or not believing, they shall all finally be saved? In that case we differ widely; for I hold that he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned. But perhaps his death effected for all men a certain amount of blessing, and left them to make up for deficiencies by their own honest endeavours; started them all fairly and equally on the heavenly road, and, furnishing them with equal provisions for the journey, left their destiny for ever after in their own hands. In that case the saints in heaven may say, "All that we have in common with the damned we owe to the Redeemer, and all that distinguishes us from them we owe to ourselves; and this is a sentiment which I believe Calvinists and Arminians will unite to condemn. Let us confess, then,

that unless Christ died for all men, in such a manner that all shall be saved, there is no great difference between us as to the benefits which unbelievers derive from his death. As to believers, we would, I think, unite in ascribing all grace, and glory, and praise, and power to the Lord Jesus, our glorious Redeemer. Not to us, but to Him be the glory for all that we are, and shall become in the kingdom of his glory. His love was the beginning and the end of our entire salvation. He chose us, He redeemed us, He quickened us, and He glorified us. It is grace, and love, and mercy throughout, and the heart never once turns to our own doings in the matter. The song, here and in heaven, is always, "Unto Him who loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood." The whole salvation is from God, and the entire cause of the condemnation is from man. There is no other cause of the heavenly glory but "Jesus died," and there is no other reason for the condemnation of the impenitent but "Ye would not come unto me that ye might have life." The serpent was raised, but ye would not look up to it. The manna fell all around, but ye would not gather it. The water flowed from the rock in a thousand streams, but ye refused to drink. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely" (Rev. xxii. 17). Come, then, my brother, let us give up wrangling and vain contentions about words, and come to Jesus, the fountain of life. Come, seize the banner of the bleeding cross, and bear it onward and forward till it waves in peace and in triumph over a conquered world. His love, his cross, his religion, is not for one age, but for all ages; not for one nation or country, but for the whole world; and the promises of God give us assurance beforehand of its final and everlasting triumph. On, then, ye ministers of the Gospel, ye heralds of the cross; forward, in the name and strength of your God, until the perishing millions of our species shall hear the words of eternal life! Rise up, O thou church of God, rise up in the zeal and faith of apostolic



times, and go forth on thy high and eternal mission. As the stars roll their ceaseless rounds in the circle of the heavens, go thou forth with unceasing care around thy Lord, the Sun of Righteousness, until all the world be filled with his praise.

“Speak ! and the world shall hear thy voice ;  
 Speak ! and the desert shall rejoice ;  
 Scatter the gloom of heathen night,  
 And bid all nations hail the light.”

### C. THE KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD.

This is the substance of the third, fourth, and fifth verses, and we shall now discuss each of them in order.

I. “Be not deceived,” says the apostle, in the third verse. There is but one way of knowing with certainty that we have known God (*ἐγνώκαμεν*), and that is by keeping his commandments. The knowledge which does not lead to holiness is not the knowledge of God. They that know thy name shall put their trust in Thee ; and this is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. The knowledge of God is practical : it is not like an earthly science, which leaves the heart and the affections unmoved. God is such a glorious, holy, and adorable Being, that to know Him is to love Him and to delight in all his ways. His character is so perfect, his works so full of divine wisdom, his love such an overflowing ocean of goodness, that the heart, the understanding, the affections, the reason, and the will, are all captivated and enlarged by the contemplation of his glories. The character of the law-giver ensures the keeping of the law. Love lays its gentle arrests upon the will and the affections, and we yield a willing obedience to its commands. We distinguish between the knowledge which puffeth up and the knowledge of God, viz. charity, (for God is love,) which edifieth. If we have really known God we may be sure that our hearts must have been inclined to keep his commandments. For,

II. “He that saith I know Him, and keepeth not his com-

mandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (verse 4). There are two testimonies, the one of the lips, and the one of the life, and they contradict each other, so that both cannot be true. The tree is known by its fruits, and we believe the testimony of the life rather than the words of the lips. The man is a hypocrite or a deceiver, and his testimony is of no value. He is *ψεῦστης*, "a liar," and the truth is not in him. This is the direct opposite of *δικαίος*, "the righteous one." There are two great centres in the moral universe around which the events, characters, histories, and destinies of the species gather, the *true one* and the *false one*, Christ and Satan, the author of all truth and the father of lies. The *lie* (*ψεῦδος*) is the black bond which unites us to the prince of darkness, and *truth* is the golden chain which binds us to our Head and Master in heaven. The expression, "the truth is not in him," means, he is no true Christian, whatever his profession may be. The truth (*ἀλήθεια*) signifies, in the New Testament, the Christian religion—the genuine faith and practice of the Gospel (John i. 14, 17. viii. 32, 40, 45, 46. xvi. 13. xvii. 17. xviii. 37. Rom. i. 8).

#### D. KEEPING GOD'S WORD (verse 5).

I can see no just reason for limiting the meaning of the term "word" in this verse to the command given by God on the mount of transfiguration, that all men should hear and obey the Son; and M'Knight himself seems to retract his own opinion when he comes to the seventh verse. I believe "his commandments" (verses 3 and 4), and "the truth" (verse 4), and "his word" (verse 5), are all various expressions for the same thing, and all refer to the Bible or the Gospel in all its fulness. *Λόγος*, in the New Testament, like *דְּבַר*, in the Old, has frequently this comprehensive meaning. Thus it is used in Luke v. 1, when the people came to Jesus, *ἀκούειν τὸν λόγον μου Θεοῦ*, "to hear the word of God." John uses it in this sense (xvii. 6), "Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me, and they have kept thy word," *τὸν λόγον σου τετερήκασι*. Compare Acts iv. 29, 31.

viii. 14. 1 Cor. xiv. 36. 2 Cor. iv. 2. Col. i. 25. 1 Thess. ii. 13. Tit. i. 3. Heb. xiii. 7. So also Paul, in his address to Timothy, says, κήρυξον τόν λόγον, preach "the word," viz. the Gospel of Christ. So James recommends us to receive with meekness the "engrafted word" (i. 21). (See 1 Pet. ii. 8. Rev. xii. 11). In all these, and many other passages, "logos" signifies the whole word of God, or the faith and practice of the Gospel.

I. We have here, therefore, a very important delineation of the Bible, and quite inconsistent with many current theories of inspiration. It is not a congeries of histories, popular opinions, divine promises, and human imaginations, mingled together without order or arrangement, to be judged, analyzed, received, or rejected, according to the dictum of human reason. It contains a human element, like the personal Logos, but yet it is truly divine. It is no human composition or utterance of earthly wisdom, but it is λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the word of God* (Luke v. 1. Col. i. 25), because He is its author. The Bible is God's book, in which we read his mind and will towards his fallen world. It is the moral monument which He has erected to his *grace* and *love*, as the visible universe is the memorial of his eternal power and godhead. The one opens to the eyes of the *creature* the transcendent glories of the Creator, in the wisdom, foresight, power, and majesty which pervade and govern the universe; the other opens to the eye of the *sinner* a vision of still more intoxicating splendour, in the ocean-fulness of divine mercy which the incarnate Redeemer has revealed for the wants and the wickedness of a ruined world. These are the two monuments which God has erected to perpetuate his own glory for ever, and every inscription in them and on them bears testimony to Him, from the geological strata to the angels around the throne, from the first promise in Genesis to the hallelujahs of the church triumphant in heaven. They are both inimitable. It were as easy for you to create the world as to originate the Bible. J. J. Rousseau himself admits, that, for a human being,

the very conception of such a character as Christ would have been as great a miracle as the incarnation. Butler has shewn that every argument directed against the Bible may also be directed against the system of nature. And we may add, that if the existence and attributes of God can be proved from the external creation, so his being and attributes can be proved in the same manner from the existence of the Bible. But let us refresh our minds and our memories with some of the Scripture adjuncts connected with λόγος, "the word," and realize, in some degree at least, the manifold relations which it bears both to God and our souls. It is also called ὁ λόγος τοῦ Χριστοῦ (Acts viii. 25. Col. iii. 16. John v. 24. xiv. 23 [in the English the plural is false, 24]), "the word of Christ," because much of it was given by Him, and it all bears testimony to Him. He is the living personal manifestation of all its gracious promises to mankind. It is called ὁ λόγος τῆς χάριτος (Acts xiv. 3), "the word of his *grace*," because the glorious theme on which it loves to expatiate is *grace*, and especially grace as it is seen in Christ's dying love for sinful men. It is called ὁ λόγος τοῦ σταυροῦ (Cor. i. 18), "the word of the cross," because in the crucifixion of the divine Redeemer we see eternal mercy in its brightest lustre. It is called ὁ λόγος τοῦ εὐαγγελίου (Acts xv. 7), "the word of the Gospel," because it brings glad tidings of great joy to all nations. It is called ὁ λόγος τῆς βασιλείας, "the word of the kingdom," because it holds out to all believers the hope of an everlasting kingdom of righteousness and peace. It is the "word of salvation" (Acts xiii. 26), because the purpose for which it was given is the salvation of sinners. It is called ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀληθείας (Eph. i. 13. 2 Tim. ii. 15), "the word of truth," because, as Chillingworth says, it has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without mixture of error for its contents. And we will only add, it is called ὁ λόγος τῆς ζωῆς (Phil. ii. 16), "the word of life," because it reveals to a sinful, perishing world the doctrines of life and immortality. This is the word which we are to keep.



II. *The Consequence.* "He that keepeth his word, verily in him is the love of God perfected." The position of ἀληθῶς is much more emphatic than that of our "verily." ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ may in itself, and apart from the connection of the passage, mean either "the love of God to men," or "the love of men to God." The latter is evidently its meaning in this place and in several others in the epistle (ii. 15. iii. 17. v. 3). This is its ordinary signification in John (John v. 42. xv. 10, 13), though in many passages it has the other signification (1 John iv. 9, 16). The general meaning of our verse, therefore, is, that the only way to arrive at perfection is by keeping the word of God: an earnest and close application to the means of grace which God hath appointed in his word, is the direct road to the highest perfection of which our nature is capable. The way in which the principle of love to God can be best fed and nourished within us is by keeping his word. A close and diligent walk with Him in the light of his own blessed Gospel is the most likely and proper way for ripening the seeds of divine grace and love to greatest perfection. Those men who keep closest to the law and the testimony are most likely to resemble Him in whom the law and the prophets had their perfect fulfilment. The love of God to man is most perfectly revealed in his word, and in keeping that word their corresponding love to Him is perfected—τετελείωται. This word was a subject of fierce controversy between the Papists and Protestants at the time of the Reformation. We pass by the errors on both sides into which the heat of controversy led them. Calvin gives the exact point of the passage with admirable sagacity—"Indicare voluit quid a nobis deus exigit, et in quo posita sit fidelium sanctitas; si quis objiciat, neminem unquam fuisse repertum, qui Deum ita perfectè diligeret, respondeo, sufficere modo quisquis pro gratiæ sibi datæ mensura ad hanc perfectionem aspiret. Interim constat definitio, quod perfectus Dei amor sit legitima sermonis ejus observatio." Nor is there the least necessity for explaining away the natural and obvious meaning of τετελείωται, *is perfected*, into *is realized* (*mettre en*

*execution*), with Beza and others, nor, with Bengel, to take the phrase "the love of God" as denoting his love to us. Surely, if our love to God be not perfected, we have a perfect and sufficient reason for it in that we do not perfectly keep his word. Are there any examples of men who kept his word in whom the love of God was not perfected? The imperfection of the love is manifested and measured by the imperfection of the keeping of the word of God. Jesus kept the word of God in its full and proper sense, and in Him verily was the love of God perfected; and we, too, as followers of God and disciples of Christ, are perfect in love, peace, joy, and all the fruits of righteousness, in proportion as we keep the word of God. There is nothing in the passage that favours the flimsy perfection of the monks, or that opposes the justification by faith taught by the Bible and the Reformers. But let us leave the bitter waters of controversy, and meditate for a while on ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the love of God*. It is, indeed, a noble theme, and will well repay our most diligent study.

1st. Love *begins* in the circle of the heart, and flows forth upon its objects in proportion to its fervour and strength. We cannot, therefore, even pretend to love God if He is not frequently the object of our thoughts, if He does not occupy a conspicuous place in our hearts. Tell over the months, weeks, days, hours, moments, of the last year, and say how much of your time has been spent in thinking of God. One hour out of the twenty-four? The truth is, those who really think at all are few in number, and those who think of God in any steady, regular way are still fewer. Yet, if we love Him, we must *think* of Him. This is the first law of love, whether human or divine.

2dly. Love is a *strong* passion. It makes itself known and felt in many ways, so that its existence is easily traced by the joy which it gives, by the difficulties it surmounts, by the trials which it endures, and by the deeds which it accomplishes. Is, then, the love of the Lord our God a strong, glowing, divine

fervour, which leads us to find our supreme delight in Him, and to count all things as worthless in comparison with this heavenly treasure? Has it made us triumph over all difficulties, rejoice in all kind of labours, trials, and afflictions, for Christ's sake, glory in our infirmities, that the power of God might be manifested in them, and in every storm and battle of life more than conquerors through Him that loved us? This was the glorious characteristic of the apostolic church, that the love of God filled their hearts so abundantly, and made them such noble witnesses for the ascended Redeemer. Oh, could we but share this divine love! Could we really find our delight in God, the Father and Creator of the world!

"Sic Deus! Semper amem te,  
 Ut ipse tu amasti me,  
 Sed amem te, quod mea spes  
 Et meum summum bonum es."

Are we indeed straining after this perfect love of the holy and blessed God, and seeking daily and hourly to make Him our chief good, the great, the sole object of our thoughts, wishes, and desires? Love should increase and strengthen by every fresh discovery of the beauty and excellence of its object; and even to every new view of the adorable character of Jehovah, every fresh act of intimacy and fellowship, every eagle-glance of faith and hope into the ineffable glories of our God and Redeemer, should inflame our souls with fresh ardour, and urge us on to the perfection of divine love. The soul, too, is not a material substance, to be filled and satisfied with distinct and definite quantities, but immaterial and spiritual, like God its Creator. It derives from every enjoyment new capacity for enjoying, from every heavenward flight in the region of divine love the desire and the power to ascend higher;

"And onward, still onward, arising, ascending,  
 To the right hand of power and joy never-ending."

Nor does there seem to be any known limit to the enlargement and perfection of which the redeemed nature of man is capable. Ages of blessedness and glory may roll over us, and find us only entering the temple of perfection; and at the end of myriads of ages more the enlarged vision may be discovering, in the Creator and the creation, new sources of wonder and adoration; new and fresh manifestations of the all-pervading, ineffable, unapproachable godhead, in whom all glory and perfection dwell; the infinite object of our imitation, to whom we shall be assimilating in all noble qualities, though still at infinite distances, through all the ages of eternity. What a creature, then, is man! What divine faculties and capacities are in him! And what a work was redeeming love, which opened up to hope such visions of endless perfection and glory! Oh, my God! thou art my Maker, my King, my Redeemer, and my Judge, and I seek to love and adore thee. Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth whom I desire besides thee.

3dly. How can we best increase this love to God? The answer is suggested in our text, namely, by *keeping the word of God*. The Bible is the law to which we are to be conformed; and the more clearly its precepts and promises, its doctrines and duties, are written upon our hearts, the greater must be our progress in the way towards perfection. Monks and hermits may make laws for their guidance, and impose upon themselves many restrictions and penances, and, in performing their daily rounds of pilgrimages and paternosters, they may deem themselves far advanced on the road to perfection, while the revealed will of God has not been consulted in the whole of it, and pride and voluntary humility may be at the bottom of it all. The *Bible* is the directory of the saints, and holiness consists in obedience to its commands. We come now to the exposition of the sixth verse, which contains,



*E.* THE BELIEVER'S COMMUNION WITH CHRIST AND WALK IN HIM.

In the third, fourth, and fifth verses it is doubtful whether God or Christ is the subject of the discourse, and some commentators refer the "Him" and "his" to the one, and some to the other. The sixth verse seems to decide the matter. Lücke, indeed, understands the verse thus, "He that saith he abideth in God ought himself also so to walk, even as Christ walked;" but this is doing violence to the natural meaning of the text, and introducing *two* persons where the unity of the passage and the consistency of the figure require only one. The simple natural sense is, "He that saith he abideth in Christ ought also himself so to walk, even as He walked.

I. *ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν*, "*abiding in Christ*," is the first great idea of the verse, and opens up to our view the whole subject of the believer's communion with Him. By faith we are brought to the Lord and engrafted in Him as members of his body and children of his grace (Gal. iii. 26). This union and communion is signified and sealed to us and to our children in the covenant of baptism, which incorporates us into the community of the faithful, and entitles us to the blessings of the family of God. Being thus *in Christ* (Rom. viii. 1, *ἐν Χριστῷ*) by the spirit of faith, the apostle's exhortations are often directed to ensure our *abiding* in Him, lest we should fall from our steadfastness, or Satan gain an advantage over us. For the apostle's use of the phrase *μένειν ἐν*, "*to abide in Christ*," consult the following texts, John vi. 56. xiv. 10. xv. 4, 5, 6, 7. 1 John ii. 6. iii. 24. iv. 15, 16. The other apostles rarely or never use such forms of expression; so that here again we see one of the peculiarities of the style of John. Following out the same usage, we find our apostle connecting *μένειν* with such adjuncts as the following: the believer abides in *the Light* (1 John ii. 10); in God *the Father* (ii. 24); in *the love of God* (iii. 17. iv. 16); in *the*

*doctrine of Christ* (2 John 9); and Paul speaks of our abiding in the *faith* (1 Tim. ii. 15). All these are essentially the same as our text, and shew forth the believer's union with the Son of God. To abide in Him is to abide in the light, in the love of God, and in the doctrine of the cross. If it be asked, How is this union formed and sustained? we reply, by the Holy Spirit. He is the life that flows from the head into the members, and circulates through the whole church, like the sap in the vine or the blood in the human body. The Father and the Son are one by the unity of the Spirit, and all believers are one by the unity of the same Spirit, which pervades them all (John xvii. 21). This union with Christ is twofold. There is an outward and an inward union with Him spoken of in the Scriptures; there are fruitful and unfruitful branches in the vine; there is a living and a dead faith spoken of in the Bible; there is the baptism of fire and the baptism of water; there is the real and permanent bond of the Spirit in the fellowship of faith and love, and the mere nominal bond of an external profession. This abiding in Jesus Christ, when it is a reality and not a mere name, is a strong operative principle, and controls the whole course of the life and conduct. The union is close, ancient, and endearing. We are in Him and abide in Him by the eternal electing love of God (Eph. i. 4); we are in Him and abide in Him by the communion of the Holy Ghost; we are in Him and abide in Him by all the ties of faith, love, and an external profession before the world; and, lastly, we are in Him and abide in Him by the free voluntary choice of our own minds, for he is dearer to us than all others, has done more for us than all others, and we cleave to Him as the chief among ten thousands, and altogether lovely.

II. Therefore the apostle says our *walk* should be like his (verse 6); and when we think of the example set before us, and the sins and iniquities which encompass us round about on every side, we may well say with the Christian poet—

“O, for a closer walk with God ;  
 A calm and heavenly frame ;  
 A light to shine upon the road  
 That leads me to the Lamb.”

Περιπατεῖν, like הִלֵּךְ (Gesén. Thesaur. Vol. II.), is often used in a moral sense, as when we say they walk in the *truth* (2 John 4. 3 John 3, 4) ; they walk in *Jesus Christ*, rooted and grounded in love (Col. ii. 6) ; they walk in *newness of life* (2 Cor. iv. 2). Sometimes the life of the believer is delineated as a battle, in which the soldiers of the cross, under the Captain of salvation, are waging war against the king and the kingdom of darkness ; sometimes it is a pilgrimage to the holy city of Jerusalem ; and sometimes it is a race, where the victors, under the plaudits of the spectators, are rewarded with the conqueror's crown : here it is a *walk* with God. We may observe that the standard set before us is very high—*even as He walked*. This is worthy of Him who cannot look upon sin but with abhorrence, and who, in the person of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit, has made provision for our perfect holiness. He can never let down the standard of the divine law. It waves from the top of Sinai in the same flaming lineaments as in the days of old, and the work of redeeming love was not to abrogate, but to fulfil and vindicate its requirements. Be it ours, then, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth, until, conquerors through his love, we shall enter into the rest that remains for the people of God. Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Let us be in earnest in the great work of sanctification, that when He, who is our life, shall appear, we also may appear with Him in glory.

I shall conclude this exposition and lecture with the noble canticle of Augustine against the tyranny of sin.

- “ 1. Quid Tyranne, quid minaris?  
 Quid usquam pœnarum est,  
 Quidquid tandem machinaris,  
 Hoc amanti parum est.  
 Dulce mihi cruciari,  
 Parva vis doloris est;  
 ‘Malo mori quam fœdari’  
 Major vis amoris est.
2. Para rogos, quamvis truces,  
 Et quidquid flagrorum est,  
 Adde ferrum, adde cruces;  
 Nil adhuc amanti est.  
 Dulce mihi cruciari,  
 Parva vis doloris est;  
 ‘Malo mori quam fœdari’  
 Major vis amoris est.
3. Nimis blandus dolor ille,  
 Una mors, quam brevis est!  
 Cruciatu amo mille!  
 Omnis poena levis est.  
 Dulce mihi sauciari,  
 Parva vis doloris est;  
 ‘Malo mori quam fœdari’  
 Major vis amoris est.”

## AGAINST THE TYRANNY OF SIN.

- “ 1. Tyrant! wherefore dost thou threaten?  
 What can pain or death avail?  
 All thy wiles are unavailing;  
 He that loves can never fail.  
 Sweet the cross when borne for Jesus,  
 Light my pains and sorrows are:  
 I can die, but never grieve Him!  
 Love than death is stronger far.
2. Shall the flames of persecution,  
 Death or torture make me quail?  
 Nothing shakes my resolution:  
 He that loves can never fail.



Sweet the cross when borne for Jesus ;  
 Light my pains and sorrows are :  
 I can die, but never grieve Him !  
 Love than death is stronger far.

3. Sweet, too sweet, are pain and torture ;  
 Once to die, how short it proves !  
 Death a thousand times repeated  
 Seems but light to him that loves.  
 Sweet the cross when borne for Jesus,  
 Light my pains and sorrows are :  
 I can die, but never grieve Him !  
 Love than death is stronger far.

### GEGENGIFT WIDER DIE TYRANNEI DER SÜNDE.

- “1. Zwingherr, eitel ist dein Dreuen ;  
 Was die Welt an Strafen kennt,  
 Was du heut ersinnst von Neuem  
 Wirkt nichts, wo die Liebe brennt.  
 Süss sind Marter mir und Bande,  
 Keiner Schmerzen hab ich Acht ;  
 ‘Lieber Tod als Sündenschandè’  
 Grösser ist der Liebe Macht.
2. Grause Scheiterhaufen schichte,  
 Geissle, Stäupe mich aufs Blut,  
 Kreuz und Eisen, Bleigewichte,  
 Nichts erschreckt den Liebes mut.  
 Süss sind Marter mir und Bande,  
 Keiner Schmerzen hab ich Acht ;  
 ‘Lieber Tod als Sündenschande’  
 Grösser ist der Liebe Macht.
3. Allzusüss sind diese Qualen,  
 Schön der kurze Todesschmerz,  
 Kreuzestod zu tausendmalen  
 Trüge gern ein liebend Herz.  
 Mir ist wohl im Wundenbrände,  
 Keiner Schmerzen hab ich Acht ;  
 ‘Lieber Tod als Sündenschande’  
 Grösser ist der Liebe Macht.

## CHAPTER V.

Ἀδελφοὶ, οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ἐντολὴν παλαιὰν ἣν εἶχετε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. Ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ παλαιὰ ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος ὃν ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς.

Πάλιν ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ, καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν· ὅτι ἡ σκοτία παράγεται, καὶ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει.

Ὁ λέγων ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι, καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶν, ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν ἕως ἄρτι.

Ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει καὶ σκάνδαλον ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν.

Ὁ δὲ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶ, καὶ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ περιπατεῖ, καὶ οὐκ οἶδε ποῦ ἰπάγει, ὅτι ἡ σκοτία ἐτύφλωσε τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ.

Γράφω ὑμῖν, τέκνιά, ὅτι ἀφέωνται ὑμῖν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

Γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. Γράφω ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν. Γράφω ὑμῖν,

Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you : because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write

παιδιά, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα.

Ἐγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. Ἐγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροὶ ἐστε, καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει, καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν.

unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

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I. Ἀδελφοὶ, "*Brethren*," is the first word in the seventh verse which requires explanation, and in the New Testament we may observe the following significations. By its derivation (from α and δελφύς, "born of the same mother") it naturally designates those born of the same parents (Matt. i. 2. Luke i. 19. vi. 14, 16. Acts i. 13); then, ἀδελφός, like ΠΝ (Gen. xiii. 8. xiv. 6), is applied to near relatives (Matt. xii. 46. Acts i. 14. Gal. i. 19). It signifies a fellow-countryman (Matt. v. 47. Heb. vii. 5); like ΠΝ (Ex. ii. 11. iv. 18). Those of equal rank are called brethren (Matt. xxiii. 8). Disciples and followers of the same master are brethren (Acts ix. 30. 1 Cor. v. 11). It signifies, also, those who have the same common nature—fellow-men, fellow-sinners, or fellow-Christians (Matt. v. 22. Heb. ii. 17).

And in all these significations the word has a real and important application in our text. 1st. Those who believe on the Lord Jesus, the little children of whom the apostle speaks in our epistle, have the same Father, God, of whom the whole family in heaven and in earth is named (Eph. iii. 15), and the same mother, the free woman, called the new Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all (Gal. iv. 26—31). They are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and, in the strictest sense of the word, *brethren*. They are begotten by the same incorruptible seed of the word of God; they are nourished by the same logical milk (1 Pet. ii. 2); and they shall finally enter into the same eternal inheritance. 2dly. They are blood relations to the King of Glory, who assumed flesh and blood the same as the children (Heb. ii. 14) that He might be our Kinsman Redeemer and ever-living High Priest and Mediator in heaven. They are bound to one another by the closest bonds of love and affection; they are related to the same Prince; they fight the same battles; they are surrounded by the same enemies; they are cheered by the same promises of life and immortality. 3dly. Are they not all of equal rank as the disciples and followers of their divine Master? One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren. They are all equally well born from the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. The same precious blood of the Son of God was shed for them all, and by the same Spirit of grace they are all prepared for glory. There is no aristocracy in the kingdom of grace, save that finer and nobler kind which arises from the firmer will and closer fellowship with God, and more abundant sufferings for the name of Christ. The nobles in this brotherhood are not found in palaces and stately mansions, surrounded with pomp and human splendour, but in the high places of the field, fighting the battles of the faith; or among heathen nations and savage tribes, proclaiming the messages of life and salvation; or in the dungeons of the mystic Babylon for keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Rev. xiv). These are the nobles,



not of nature's, but of grace's making, who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 4thly, and lastly, they are all brethren, because they are possessors of the same renewed nature, having escaped the corruptions that are in the world through lust (2 Pet. i. 4). They have all the same new name, the same new nature, the same new heart and spirit within them, the same New Jerusalem for their residence in glory, the same new earth beneath their feet, and the same new heavens above them. They were connected with the first Adam, and now they are members of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven. Thus, in every conceivable sense, these dear Christians, to whom John writes an ἀδελφοὶ, "brethren;" and the whole church of the first-born, is styled, by way of distinction and eminence, ἡ ἀδελφότης, "the fraternity, or brotherhood" (1 Pet. ii. 17. v. 9), as being the only corporation in the world where the principles of kindness and brotherly love have full scope and exercise. Let us never forget, therefore, in the midst of our divisions and contentions in Christendom, that all true Christians are really brethren, whatever be their name, country, or colour, and, as such, are bound to love one another, and so fulfil the royal law of Christ. The Papists have built up partition walls, and others have not failed to imitate them; but the true church of God, the blood-redeemed brethren of the Redeemer, should disregard such artificial enclosures. They are all one for time and for eternity, and no hedges of human planting should keep them asunder. They shall unite in heaven, and they should unite upon earth. This is the true idea of the church of Christ, and whenever it is abandoned, laxity on the one hand, and stringency on the other, will lead to fearful evils: one church will receive all the baptized without the least discrimination, and another will shut out multitudes of the converted without compunction: nor is it easy to say whether the principle of admitting the servants of the devil, or that of rejecting the servants and brethren of Christ, be the more fatal and fundamental evil.

II. Ἐντολὴ παλαιά, “the old commandment,” is the next subject contained in our verse, and the apostle says “it is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.” This keeping of the word of God, which perfects in the soul the love of God—this abiding in the Son of God, and walking as he walked—is in reality nothing *new*: it is only the ancient and eternal law of God, which requires the perfect love and obedience of the creature; the law which was impressed upon the heart of Adam at his creation; the law of perfect love to God and man, which pealed over the trembling multitudes from the top of Sinai; the law which ye have heard a thousand times repeated and insisted upon from the beginning of the Gospel dispensation; and it is the law which remains the unchangeable guide and directory of the Christian church. Dispensations may alter, but the perfect law of the immutably holy God remains for ever the same. Ye are not delivered from its requirements; but ye are enabled, by the work of the Son of God in our nature, and the effusion of the Holy Ghost from on high, to yield to it a higher and more satisfactory obedience. Not as a sin-indulger, but as the law-fulfiller, hath the adorable Redeemer come into the room of guilty sinners that He might magnify the law and make it honourable, and vindicate, before angels and men, the righteous administration of God. From the beginning of the world every creature was under the law of obedience to the Creator, the law of perfect love; and your walk in the light of God’s presence, your constant communion with the Son of God, your onward and upward progress in the path of divine perfection, are but higher manifestations of the same glorious, all-comprehending law.

III. ἡ ἐντολὴ ἡ καινὴ. Yet this ancient law of love and obedience may, in a certain sense, be called a *new commandment* (John xiii. 34. xv. 12, 17). One of the noblest forms of it is *brotherly love*, and this the Saviour hath made the distinguishing mark of his disciples, and in this sense it is new (John xiii. 35). By the command and example of the Saviour, the principle of

brotherly self-sacrificing love is carried out unto death itself; so that, as He laid down his life for us, we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (1 John iii. 16); and in this sense it is new. The ancient, eternal law has been re-enacted and republished under new sanctions by a new law-giver, the God-Man; and in this sense it may be called a new law or commandment. Besides, it is extended to a *new* community, which was not in existence until these last times, when the Son of God has been manifested among us. A *new* and extraordinary example of obedience hath confirmed and sealed it. *New* and more glorious promises have been attached to the keeping of it; new and supernatural powers have been conferred upon the keepers of it; so that, in many most important respects, it may be properly called a new commandment. The construction of the next phrase, ὁ ἐστὶν ἀληθὺς, is difficult, and the criticism perplexed and divided. If the meaning of the apostle be that this new commandment is true in him and in you, he would naturally have written ἡ ἐστὶν ἀληθὴς, as he did in the sixth verse, when speaking of the old commandment. Most of the commentators pass it over without any notice. Macknight refers the ὁ to *πράγμα* understood (as our translators evidently did), referring to Acts ix 35 and Mark ix. 20 as his justification. Knapp resolves the sentence thus, πάλιν (ὡς) ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω τοῦτο ὁ—“As a new commandment I write unto you *that* which is true both in Him and in you. Morus and Lücke account for the neuter ὁ by resolving the sentence thus—“I have named this commandment a new one, and this assertion is *that which* is true both in Him and in you;” but against this it may be objected that he does not say I have named this a new commandment, but “I *write* a new commandment,” which is certainly quite different: and then, again, it is not easy to see how the truth of John’s assertion, that the commandment is a new one, is verified both in Christ and his disciples. Much more natural is it, certainly, to suppose that the new commandment is verified in Him and in them, and this I believe is the meaning

of the relative sentence, however we may account for the form.

I believe, therefore, that the  $\delta$  must refer to the  $\eta$  ἐντολή, however strange it may appear, and however you may seek to connect it *more nearly* with τοῦτο or πρᾶγμα; for in that case the πρᾶγμα, or, as in our translation, "thing," is, in the end, no other than "the new commandment." That a neuter relative may refer to a feminine antecedent in certain cases I prove by the following examples: in Eph. ii. 8 τοῦτο refers to the antecedent  $\eta$  πίστις; in Eph. vi. 18 αὐτὸ τοῦτο refers to a feminine antecedent; to which you may add Phil. i. 28 and Gal. iii. 17. But how is the new commandment proved to be true both in Christ and in his disciples? Christ really laid down his life for his enemies, and thus the new command of love was fulfilled in Him in its highest requirements; and as ye, too, are willing to lay down your lives for the brethren, it is also fulfilled in you: and if you wish to know the reason why this new command is so gloriously verified in the Head and in the members, it is "because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." We are under the effulgence of gospel light, and it is but natural to expect the perfection of gospel love. Σκοτία, "darkness," is a favourite word with the apostle. In the gospel he uses it six times, and in our epistle five. Paul never uses it; Mark only in x. 27, and Luke in xii. 3. The ordinary word for darkness in the New Testament is τὸ σκότος, which John has, however, only in iii. 19; see Isa. ix. 1,  $\text{שָׁמַר}$ ; Matt. iv. 16; Luke i. 37; 1 Thess. v. 4, 5; 1 Pet. ii. 9. In these, and other passages, τὸ σκότος is the symbol of ignorance, corruption, and death, and in John σκοτία has generally this signification. The three words are synonymous, at least, from their usage in the New Testament, they appear to be so. See John viii. 12; xii. 35, 46; 1 John i. 5; ii. 8, 9, 11; σκοτία and φῶς are here, and in many places, put for the two kingdoms which have divided the world from the beginning, and are destined to divide it to the end and for ever. These are the pure and the impure, the



righteous and the wicked, the sheep and the goats, the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness, where the Son of God and the father of lies have their respective dominions. Darkness is a mere negative, and teaches us that heathenism wanted the positive principles of righteousness and truth, which were requisite to preserve it from destruction. It was, and is, an enormous mass of lying wonders, human folly, worldliness, and ambition, and the proper name for it is "darkness." The noble and fruitful idea of our supreme, glorious, and eternal God was so entangled and obscured by a mass of subsidiary deities to fill up the chasm between man and the Creator, that its conservative power was nearly extinguished. The human virtues of valour and justice, which, when freely exercised, compensate for the want of much, become exhausted and vitiated, and then the frame-work of the social edifice, bereft of the pillars that should sustain it, crumbles to pieces. The heathenism of Greece and Rome was in this condition when the apostle wrote. He could truly say *παράγεται*, "it is passed," or "it is *passing* away; the darkness is yielding to the light, and the Gospel is destined to conquer the world. But inasmuch as there are some minds, even in the present generation, who seem intoxicated with the splendours of ancient Greece and Rome, and in our schools these ancient historical nations occupy a conspicuous place, it may be well to consider briefly in what sense the heathenism of the ancient world was *σκοτία*, or "darkness." We know, from their literature, from their history, and from the ancient monuments of the Romans, that their morality was of the lowest and most imperfect kind: the virtues for which they were celebrated were the rude virtues of the savage rather than those of civilized nations; their gods were of a very mixed character, and demonstrate very clearly how barbarous and licentious the masses of the people must have been; the images of Venus and Mars could awaken the ideas of only questionable and ambiguous virtues; even the magnificent head of Jupiter could excite only the conceptions of power, and

majesty, and firmness. And when we consider the virtues and vices which were deified among the popular masses, we may well believe, with the apostle John, that the whole system of the immense and intricate superstition was "darkness." Blessed be God! it is past. The power of the ancient superstition is broken, and new life and vigour poured into the life of our species.

IV. Τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, "and the true light shineth." Light, the subtle, penetrating fluid, connected in some way with the sun, and shedding such lustre, and beauty and joy over the world, is one of the finest and most frequently used types of the Gospel of Christ. Jesus is the light of the world (John i. 4, 5. iii. 19. viii. 12. ix. 5); the Sun of Righteousness rising over us with healing on his wings. Believers are appointed and ordained of God to be a light shining in a dark place, till the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts; and the doctrine of the cross, which is the Gospel of Jesus the Saviour, is the light of life (John v. 35. viii. 12. Acts xxvi. 23). The Gospel hath the *universality* of light, being designed by the Creator for the whole family of man. Like light it chases away the clouds of ignorance and superstition, and lifts up the families that receive it into fellowship with God. It produces and ripens the fruits of righteousness whenever its influence is imparted among men; and, like the radiance of the sun, it imparts to all its followers a serene and peaceful joy. This light shone in the days of the apostles, and it shines with undiminished splendour at the present time; nor will it cease until the whole earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Should we not feel, too, in our souls, that the Gospel principles have something of the diffusive nature of light?

"Shall we, whose souls are lighted  
With wisdom from on high,  
Shall we, to men benighted,  
The lamp of life deny?"

O never, never let us sit down in the slumber of repose while the shadow of eternal death rests over millions of the human race, and the command of God, "Go ye, and preach the Gospel to every creature," sounds in our ears. The true light shines; and, while sitting under its radiance, let us think of the regions of the earth that are full of darkness and horrid cruelty; and wrestling, like Jacob, let us give our God no rest till He break the yoke of heathen bondage, and fill the whole world with the glory of his name. Then shall the whole earth be at rest, and all creation filled with his praise.

"Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus,  
Dominus Deus Sabaoth!  
Pleni sunt coeli et terra  
Majestate gloriæ tuæ!"

V. Ὁ μισῶν. He that hateth his brother is the awful character which the apostle brings before us in the 9th verse. For the use of the word μισέω consult the following passages: Matt. v. 43. x. 22. xxiv. 9. Mark xiii. 13. Luke i. 71. Eph. v. 29. Tit. iii. 3.

1st. Is it not strange that such characters should seek to attach themselves to the Christian church? Why should men whose hearts are far from us seek to join our company as we journey on to Zion? Why should they say they are in the light when they hate the brethren and walk in darkness? These are the hypocrites, who, like whited sepulchres, are fair only in the outward appearance, while within all is rottenness, corruption, and death. Their hypocrisy is the public and external homage which vice pays to virtue; for there is in the bosom of most men a lingering conviction, however their lips and their lives may belie it, that holiness, virtue, the service of religion, and heavenymindedness of the New Testament, are, in the end, more valuable to the soul than the pomps and vanities of the world. Hence they like to be found somewhere in the porches of the temple of Truth, though they

may be unwilling to enter into the holiest of all: they will profess to be in the light; they will give their substance for Christian and benevolent purposes, and, it may be, hear much of the gospel with gladness. These are the border-Christians who keep going back and forward over the boundaries that separate the two kingdoms: they are neither children of light nor of darkness; they wish to enjoy both worlds as far as possible, and are heartily and earnestly the denizens of neither. These men will oppose with great earnestness the immoralities of the world, while they repudiate the fearful charge of being righteous overmuch: they are neither infidels nor enthusiasts in their own estimation, but men of morality and virtue, who, avoiding extremes, seek, like Phaeton of old, and the Puseyites in modern times, to strike out a middle way (*via media*) for themselves. They do not glory in the cross, but they do glory in the *name* of Christian; and, as a system of beauty, truth, and majesty, Christianity obtains their prompt and respectful homage.

2dly. Yet it is, no doubt, to such as these the apostle alludes in our text, for they claimed to be walking in the light, and yet they really hated their brethren in their hearts. It is even so with the false brethren and pretended moralists of all generations of the church: they have a name to live, but they are in reality dead, and, when occasion occurs, their hatred of the true and faithful servants of Christ will break forth with great violence. Now there is nothing more contrary to the character of the God of grace and love than *hatred*. God is love; and all that is loving, lovely, and loveable flows from Him. It is, therefore, no wonder the apostle says, "He that hateth his brother is in darkness, even until now." Here the bond of brotherhood is no external confession of faith, nor any formula of doctrine, nor any form of church government, but *love to the brethren*. This is the life-blood of the Christian church; and, when it flows, there will ever be found the pulsations of a warm and vigorous Christianity. John contemplates Christianity



as a life in God, a life of pure and holy love to God and to one another, not to be measured by credos and formulas, but by the emotions and affections of the heart. He that hateth the brother is in darkness, and he that loveth the brethren is in light. This is the fundamental difference between them, while on the subjects of dogma and speculation they may be perfectly agreed.

VI. ὁ ἀγαπῶν, "the lover," verse 10. The substance of the verse may be summed up in the sentence "Brotherly love is the test of discipleship." The *origin* of this blessed affection of the renewed soul is the moment when the power of the cross begins to be felt as a constraining power within us. Love towards the Head in heaven is awakened by the dying love of Christ; and the fountain of life and love being opened by divine grace, its waters flow over the whole heritage of God. When Jesus looked upon Peter he wept; and it is the look of Jesus in all cases that opens the springs of our sympathies and our joys. It was the Lord's grace opening the heart of Lydia which made her such an example of love and hospitality for all coming generations; so that brotherly love, like every noble and heavenly affection, dates from the conversion of the soul to God. This love, as to the extent of it, should have no limit save the bounds of the redeemed church of God. The word "brother" means any brother, viz. every Christian man or Christian woman in the world. We make distinctions which the Lord does not recognise, and which shall all pass away, like the mists of the morning, when the Lord comes to judge the world in righteousness, and deliver the creation from the bondage of corruption. We are, in fact, anxious to get away from *reality* into the region of phantoms and names, that we may have a garniture to cover our nakedness withal; for the eye of the fallen soul quails before the glance of the all-seeing God, and any thing, even fig-leaves, seems a refuge in the day of visitation. Hence we glory in high-sounding names and

titles, because therein we seek a covering. The "Catholic Church," the "Church of England or Scotland," the "Churches of the Blessed Reformation," are some of the deceitful magniloquence under which the spirit seeks to avoid the inquiry, of all others the most important, "Are we the brethren of Christ, and do we love them?" We thus seek to get away from the inquiry respecting brotherly love; and mainly because it is the principle of divine love which condemns us, and augments our responsibility so awfully. He who submits to the standard of love must be governed and judged by the divine example of Christ (I John i. 6. iii. 16); and this is precisely that from which the soul most willingly shrinks, inasmuch as it is in the example of Christ, and his dying love for man, and the eternal fulness of his provision for all human wants and contingencies, that she sees the judgment and condemnation of the world. Love is intolerable to those who do not love; and hence the cross, which is but the outward expression of the eternal love of God, has ever been the great stumbling-block in the way of cold-hearted, unloving men. Now what is all this shrinking from the principle of love but the inward anticipation and looking-for of judgment that shall consume us? Is not this love to the brother the very test of our character: yea, the law of that final judgment which is to decide the issues of eternity? Read Matt. xxv. 34—46, and you will see at once the importance of the principle of brotherly love, and the reason why we shrink from its obligations.

VII. Ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light." This weighty sentence seems to give love the first place among the Christian virtues; and, as the measure of our Christianity, it is far more tangible and manifest, both to ourselves and to others, than *faith*. Hence, in Gal. v., love stands at the head of that noble list of Christian virtues. "God is love," is the glorious assertion of our apostle; and Paul, in comparing the three cardinal graces, Faith, Hope, and Love,

says the greatest of these is love (1 Cor. xiii. 13). These assurances are in perfect keeping with the assertion of our text, that to abide in love is to dwell in the light of God ; and with the other assurance, that love is the fulfilling of the law. This overflowing of the heart in love to the children of God is the best proof and manifestation of the living faith, justifies the sinner before God, and purifies the whole conscience and life of man ; and in this sense the celebrated lines of the poet may be easily justified :—

“ For modes of faith let graceless bigots fight :  
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

He only who is a member of the family can share and exercise this family love ; and the moment we begin to love our fellow-Christians simply as *brethren* all our narrow-mindedness and sectarian bigotry dissolve like snow before the sunbeams, and the heart becomes expanded into the dimensions of redeeming love. It is no longer the Churchman or the Dissenter, the Presbyterian or the Episcopalian, the Protestant or the Papist, whom we seek to discover and to love, but *the Brother* ; and wherever he is found, and under whatever lineaments and disguises, with all his imperfections and peculiarities, we are to receive him, cherish him, and love him as a member of the body of Christ, and a fellow-heir of the grace of life. This is the proof that we are in the light ; otherwise all our pretensions to knowledge and enlightenment are vain and presumptuous ; not the steady, warming, fertilizing beams of the Sun of Righteousness, but lightning-flashes that scorch, or northern streamers that dazzle and tantalize us. In our hearts, in our families, in the church, and even in the sight of God, this sweet spirit of love compensates for the want of many things, and triumphs over all kinds of obstacles. There may be ignorance and error, there may be haste and presumption not a little ; but when we see the spirit of love we can easily pass over and forgive all faults and short-comings. When this dwells in a family, or in

a church, we have the noblest and best type of heaven, and all minor distinctions are absorbed or extinguished in the fulness of forgiving love.

“ Love, like death, hath all destroyed,  
 Rendered all distinctions void.  
 Names, and sects, and parties fall,  
 ‘Thou, O Christ, art all in all!’ ”

VIII. Hence the apostle adds, “ There is none occasion of stumbling in him.” *σκάνδαλον* was, among the heathens, “ the trapstick, or crooked stick on which the bait is fastened which the animal strikes against and so springs the trap.” Hence it came to mean generally a gin, or a snare, and in this sense the LXX. use it for מִוִּקֶּשׁ (Jos. xxiii. 13. 1 Sam. xviii. 21); and also, more generally still, any impediment in the way which hinders our progress, any stumbling-block or cause of offence whatever, Matt. xvi. 23. 1 Cor. i. 23. Gal. v. 11. Rom. xiv. 13. xvi. 17. Rev. ii. 14. The sins and falls of believers, therefore, are the snares laid by Satan to entangle the feet of the brethren and bring them into his net; when, having them fast bound, as in an iron cage, he can irritate and torment them at his pleasure. Over these stumbling-blocks the unbelieving very often fall, and their impenitent hearts become more hardened and ready for the judgment of God. David’s fall is not forgotten, though his penitential psalms are not often read by the scoffers whom Satan, with savage cunning and cruelty, is leading to stumble upon the dark mountains, that they may finally become his prey in the kingdom of darkness and death. Love is the preservative against scandal, says the apostle John. Let the heart flow forth towards the brethren in the fulness and freshness of a tender brotherly affection, and all the occasions of stumbling will soon pass away. Read, with your eye on God, the description of love given in 1 Cor. xiii., and you will see how brotherly love removes all stumbling-blocks and causes of offence out of the way. This is the



spirit which, far from seeking to wound our feelings, or magnify our differences, or find out the spots upon our white robes, delights to believe all things, bear all things, and hope all things; which, like the Master from whom it flows, is full of pity and easy to be reconciled, without partiality and without hypocrisy. Oh if this spirit in the apostolic age had descended to the after generations of the church, what a different church and a different world we would now have! How many mountains would become molehills before the spirit of love! The Protestants of the British empire, with the exception of a handful of Puseyites and Unitarians, not worthy of being mentioned in any general calculation, are essentially one on the great doctrines and duties of the Christian faith; and if the spirit of brotherly love prevailed among them as it did in the apostolic ages, they would be able to present a firmer front against the encroachments of the Roman Antichrist, and their mighty schemes of Christian benevolence and philanthropy would be multiplied ten times. May this spirit of love proceed until it has surmounted all the stumbling-blocks that lie scattered amongst us! until we have learned by practical experience the reality of the words of our apostle, "He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him!"

IX. *The consequences of hatred* (ver. 11) are the following:—

1st. He that hateth his brother *is in darkness*; which means, that he is no real Christian; his name and his profession are a mere pretence; and however he may babble about Gospel light he himself is in the darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth. He is no real member of the family of God, for he has neither the family likeness nor the family love. Of course, while the hatred continues the darkness remains, and the only way to get into the light of the Gospel is to get the heart dissolved into the affection of brotherly love. This is the first consequence of hatred, that it shuts you up in darkness, and leaves you then under the canopy of a starless, cheerless night.

2dly. He is not only in darkness, but he *walks in darkness*, which is a still more intense and accumulated evil. Hatred is no passive, easy-going affection of the soul, but a strong and fearful passion, which manifests itself in activities of every kind. This walking in darkness denotes the progress of iniquity, and teaches us that sin, like righteousness—that hatred, like love—seeks to increase and multiply, until the whole man, or the whole family, or the whole world, be subjected to its rule. He that loveth his brother walks in light, and he that hateth his brother walketh in darkness; so that the two kingdoms of love and hatred, to which they belong, are properly symbolized by the rule and manner of their walk—light and darkness. This progress in iniquity is noticed in the first Psalm, where the three stages are “walking in the counsel of the ungodly,” “standing in the way of sinners,” and then, finally, “sitting in the seat of the scornful.” This is what the poet refers to in the lines

“Vice is a monster of so frightful mien  
That, to be hated, needs but to be seen;  
Yet, seen too oft, familiar with his face,  
We first endure, then pity, then embrace.”

3dly. The apostle concludes these evil effects of this hatred with the words, “And knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.” The word *τυφλόω*, “to blind,” does not occur in the natural sense in the New Testament: the only passages where it occurs are John xii. 40. 2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 John ii. 12., in all of which it refers to the hardening, blinding effects of sin upon the understanding and the heart. In the same way we find, in Is. xlii. 19., *מִי עֵינַי* used in the sense of moral blindness, which the LXX. render *καὶ τίς τυφλὸς*, “who is blind as my servant?” Of course *οἱ ὀφθαλμοί*, “the eyes,” here mean the eyes of the understanding, or heart (Eph. i. 18.; compare Luke xix. 42. Acts xxvi. 18. John xii. 40. Rom. xi. 8). This, then, is the climax of evil, arising from the hatred of the brethren: his path is surrounded

with darkness : the whole future is cloudy and ominous, without light of sun or star, because his own wilful hatred of the children of God has blinded his understanding and his heart. The general idea of the verse is, that those who have been educated under the light of Christianity, and who nevertheless yield themselves as instruments of iniquity, become in the end fatally and irrecoverably corrupted. Their hardness is not the hardness of the natural heart only, but the hardness of one petrified by the rejection of the Gospel. Ignorance is an evil, but the quenching the light is a still greater evil. The evil of forgetting God and yielding to the seductions of idolatry, like the heathen, is enormous ; but the rejecting the love of God, and trampling on the blood of Christ, after the overtures of divine mercy have been fully and freely made known to us, is a much greater enormity. Hence, on this principle, it was to be expected, that if the enemy should find his way in the *church*, the evil generated and established there would be the most fearful that ever existed. Hence the rise, character, and doom of antichrist, being in grace what the fall of Adam was in nature, are the most awful manifestation of *sin* in the universe ; and hence antichrist is punished before the devil (Rev. xix. 20. with xx. 10). We see, indeed, everywhere, the working of this principle, and we should never forget its bearing upon our responsibility. If the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness ! It is a scriptural principle that judgment must begin at the house of God. The fiercest attacks on the Christian system have come from England and Germany, the lands where religion and culture have their fullest development, and there, too, are to be found its noblest defenders. Light, grace, and love, received, mollify the character, and imprint upon us something of the image of God : rejected, they blind and harden us into the obduracy and cruelty of the devil.

X. *Τεκνία*, "little children," here, as in ii. 1, 28, applies to

the whole church, and not to any special class in it. This is proved by the reason which he gives for writing, namely, "That your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake," which is the character of all believers. Also the abiding in Christ (ver. 28), to which John exhorts the *τεκνία*, "little children," is common to all the saints; so that, as I understand it, the phrase "little children" is of the same signification as *ἀγαπητοὶ*, "beloved," in iii. 2. The first characteristic of the believing church which I mention is, that they are *beloved of God*, treated by Him as a father treats his beloved child. He has chosen them in the Son of his love before the foundation of the world. His love redeemed them in the cross of Christ. They are actually and permanently incorporated into his family by the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, so that, in every possible way, they are the objects of his tender affection. But the apostle says he writes unto these little children, *ὅτι ἀφένονται ὑμῖν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι*, which we may translate, with Luther, Kistemaker, and others, "That your sins are forgiven for his name's sake." The message which I declare unto you is, that your sins are forgiven you for Jesus' sake. Against this there are many objections. 1st. This gives *ὅτι* a meaning which it will not bear anywhere else in the passage, where it occurs no less than seven times. In the other instances it must be translated "because." 2dly. It seems trivial to write unto these beloved children of God such a message, inasmuch as they knew already the forgiveness of their sins in the blood of Christ when they believed on Him. Macknight and others translate thus, "I write unto you because sins shall be forgiven you on account of Christ;" to which it may be objected, that *ἀφένονται* (used instead of *ἀφεῖνται*, see Winer, p. 74) is not the future, but the perfect tense, and that the forgiveness of sins is not connected with the future, but the past; not with the day of judgment, but with the atonement of Christ. Therefore, finally, the only correct translation is, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake:" your sins are forgiven you in the blood of Christ;



ye are the dear children of God: ye are not of the world, but true Christians chosen out of the world, and therefore I write unto you. Now the meaning of the phrase *δια τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*, “for his name’s sake,” has not the least difficulty, whatever the opposers of the doctrine of atonement may pretend. *ὄνομα*, Heb. *שֵׁם*, is, in multitudes of Scriptures, simply a periphrasis for God, or Christ himself, comprehending, of course, all the glories, attributes, and perfections of the being referred to (Matt. xviii. 20. vi. 9. Luke xi. 2. John xii. 28. Rom. ix. 17. Heb. ii. 12. John xvii. 11. Matt. x. 22. xiii. 13. John xv. 20, and many others). John’s *διὰ ὄνομα*, “for his name’s sake,” is the same as his assertion (i. 7), “that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;” the same as ii. 2, where He is “the propitiation for the sins of the world;” the same as iii. 16, where he asserts “that Jesus laid down his life for us;” the same as iv. 10, in which we learn that “God sent Him to be the propitiation for our sins;” and the same as the assertion (v. 11, 12, 13) that Jesus is the source of eternal life to all that believe on his name. Forgiveness is in every way connected with Christ in the New Testament. Through Him, *διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος* (Acts xiii. 38. xiv. 42), as the channel of divine mercy, God’s pardoning love flows down upon the children of men; for his sake, *διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*, as the procuring cause, Jehovah’s grace is freely proclaimed to the world. *Ἐν Χριστῷ* (2 Cor. v. 19, 21), “in Jesus Christ,” as our Head and Redeemer, are laid up for us all the treasures of the divine mercy and love. This doctrine of atoning love is not peculiar to the apostle John: it is equally taught by all the apostles, and in all the books of the New Testament, and it is the constant doctrine of the Christian church in all ages and in all countries. It does not stand alone as an isolated dogma, with which man and the administration of the divine government might have no essential connection, but as a conspicuous and fundamental pillar in the temple of divine truth, without which the entire building would crumble to pieces. It is interwoven with the texture of divine revelation

in all its parts, and intimately connected with all the doctrines of grace, so that the whole system of divine revelation stands or falls with it. I may add, the cross of Christ has always been dear to the saints of God, and it must continue to be so until sin changes its character, or Jehovah ceases to be a sin-avenging God.

XI. The fathers, *πατέρες*, mentioned in the 13th and 14th verses, are the first and most important class in the Christian community: they are the presbyters, or elders, of the ancient church, the conscript fathers of the Christian republic, by whose wisdom and prudence the whole community was to be guided. They were men of age and experience, who, like Paul, had nearly finished their course, and were ready to depart from the cross to the eternal crown. He addresses them specially, *ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*, which some would translate "Because you have known Him from the beginning," a translation which contradicts the New Testament usage of the *article* throughout, and all that Macknight has said cannot justify it. Besides, it is most improbable that these fathers had known Jesus Christ from the beginning of the Gospel dispensation. Nor is there any reason for rendering *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* from the commencement of the Gospel dispensation. Indeed, so necessarily does this *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* stand connected with *ἐν ἀρχῇ* (John i. 1), and *בְּרֵאשִׁית* (Gen. i. 1), that some zealous anti-trinitarians insist upon it that *τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς* cannot refer to the Son but to the Father, while Lücke, on the other hand, says the phrase *must* refer to the Son, because the Father has no *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*. But I deny, with Grotius, that there is any essential difference between *ἐν ἀρχῇ* and *ἀπ' ἀρχῆς*, and I will add, both of them may be, and are, applied to the eternal existence of God, even as both of them are, and may be, limited, like all other phrases, by the circumstances in which they are placed. If the intention of the apostle had been merely to state that these fathers had known Christ from the beginning of his ministry, he would naturally, instead

of τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς have written Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. The meaning of the apostle, therefore, is, not that they had personally seen and conversed with Jesus Christ from the beginning of his ministry, which could possibly be true of only a few of them, and, with respect to the great majority, must necessarily be false, but that these venerable fathers had known Him, that is from the beginning of the creation, the eternal word and revealer of God. They realized the assertion of the same apostle —“This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent (John xvii. 3). “Him that is from the beginning” expresses the eternal existence of the adorable Redeemer, into whose fellowship and grace the Gospel had brought them. The same assertion is repeated in the 14th verse to shew the importance which the apostle attaches to the knowledge of Jesus Christ; and this also proves, if more proof were necessary, that the knowledge here mentioned does not refer to their having known Christ after the flesh, but the doctrines of his person, the redeeming love of his cross, the communion of the Holy Ghost, which they obtained through Him.

XII. The apostle next names the young men νεανίσκοι, the same as נַעַר (1 Sam. xvii. 55. Is. iii. 3), used for יָלֵד (Ez. x. 1). It signifies men in the vigour of life in Acts ii. 17, and in our text it is opposed to the fathers and elders of the church. In Mark xiv. 51 it is applied to the soldiers of the guard. The word is found in the following passages: Matt. xix. 20, 22. Mark xiv. 51. xvi. 5. Luke vii. 14. Acts ii. 17. v. 10. 1 John ii. 13, 14. These young men are truly the warriors of the cross, who have given up the world for Jesus, and are heartily engaged in his service. They are neither the recruits nor the veterans of the Christian army, but the strong and vigorous soldiers who are actually engaged in the battle. Their characteristics are the following:—1st. They had overcome τὸν πονηρὸν, “the wicked one.” They were the soldiers of the cross, and

they had conquered Satan, the enemy of their souls. They had dedicated the vigour and strength of their life to the service of the Saviour, and his grace had made them victorious over all his wiles and machinations. This he repeats in verse 14, in order to mark the importance of it, and to give them proper encouragement. There are, indeed, few things in this world more admirable than the thorough dedication of strong and vigorous men to the service of God. The heart is in its prime, and all its fulness is dedicated to the Lord. It is not after the world has forsaken us that we should take up with Christ, but when all the faculties of mind and body are in strength and vigour. These vigorous young men were first conquered by the cross, and then they had overcome the wicked one. They deemed their strength and all their labours and services too little for their heavenly master. 2dly. He writes to them because they are strong, and the word of God abideth in them (verse 14). The source of their and our strength must ever be the word of God; nor is there any victory over ourselves, or over our spiritual enemies, but by the word. I have already expatiated on this theme in 1 John ii. 5, where we saw that the keeping of the word of God leads to the perfecting of divine love in our hearts, and at present we need say little more on the subject. Where the word of God abides, there we find the fruits of the Spirit, and the strength, blessedness, and peace which the Lord has promised to his people. Those, therefore, who neglect it need expect no victory over themselves or the enemies of their souls: indeed, without it they know neither the character and malignity of their enemies, nor the source of their own strength.

XIII. He now concludes with *παιδιά*, “babes in Christ,” which formed the hope of the church; see Luke xviii. 16, 17. Matt. xix. 13, 14. Mark x. 13. These were the young converts who were under instruction, and whose only characteristic was, “that they had known the Father.” Much remained to learn, but this, at least, they had attained unto, that they knew their



Father in heaven: they had begun the Abba-Father cry (Gal. iv. 6), which would rise higher and ever become louder and stronger, until they mingled with the redeemed in glory. I do not take *παῖδιά* as synonymous with *τεκνία*. The latter is never, in Scripture, applied to infant children, while the former is (Luke xviii. 15, 16). Throughout our epistle, *τεκνία*, "little children," designates the whole church; while here *παῖδιά* is contrasted and compared with "the fathers" and "the young men" as distinct classes in the church. The three classes are, "fathers," "young men," and "little children," and these, in the language of John, represented the three most important classes in the Christian community, viz. the old, experienced Christians, the strong, vigorous men, and the young converts, or babes in Christ. May the Lord enable us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ! Amen.

## CHAPTER VI.

Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον, μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ· ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

Ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν, καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστί.

Καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται, καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ· ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ Θεοῦ, μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

Παιδιά, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστί· καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ὁ ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γεγόνασιν· ὅθεν γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστί.

Ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθον, ἀλλ' οὐκ ᾔσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν· εἰ γὰρ ᾔσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν, μεμενέκεισαν ἂν μεθ' ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶ πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν.

Καὶ ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου, καὶ οἴδατε πάντα.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

Οὐκ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκ  
οἶδατε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλ' ὅτι  
οἶδατε αὐτὴν, καὶ ὅτι πᾶν ψευδὸς  
ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστι.

I have not written unto you  
because ye know not the truth,  
but because ye know it, and that  
no lie is of the truth.

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THE apostle has told us how we should walk in our heavenly pilgrimage; how we should seek recovery and peace after sin has overtaken us; how it is possible to attain unto the perfection of divine love; and what are the principles which necessarily lead us into darkness and death. He has written to the various classes of the church; and now, in the 15th verse, he resumes the consideration of the church as a whole, and his deep and holy warnings are necessary and profitable to the church in all ages, until every enemy of God and his people be finally and for ever subdued.

## I. THE LOVE OF THE WORLD; ἡ ἀγάπὴ τοῦ κόσμου.

This may be denominated the general substance of the 15th verse, and we shall now seek to understand the command of the Lord by his apostle—"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world."

1st. And the first thought which necessarily arises in the mind on reading the verse is undoubtedly the importance of the *principle of love* in the life of the individual believer, as well as in the history and developement of the whole Christian church. He has told us whom we are bound to love (ii. 10), and now he informs us of those whom we are not to love. The two kingdoms which from the beginning have divided the creation rise up in the mind of the apostle as claiming the love and obedience of mankind; the Cains and the Abels, the Sauls and the Davids, the Esaus and the Jacobs, the kingdom of darkness, headed up by the devil, and the kingdom of light, and peace, and joy, whose King and Head is the Lord Jesus Christ. Both of these claim our service and love, and the apostle puts a solemn negative upon every claim which would alienate the heart from the saints and the Saviour. He speaks not of following or serving the world merely, but of loving the world. The fountain that needs to be purified is the heart, and the apostle claims all its affections for God and divine things. Generally speaking, love occupies the most conspicuous place among the graces and virtues that adorn the Christian character. It stands at the head of that noble list (Gal. v. 22), where the various clusters of the fruit of the true vine are compared and contrasted with the fruits of Sodom and the grapes of Gomorrah. Love was the eternal emotion in the bosom of the Deity to which we owe the Saviour and the glories of his cross (John iii. 16) Love, in one of its forms, as we have seen, is the new commandment of the Redeemer, while yet, in its essence, it is as old as the creation, and must remain, like its author, unchangeable. When the three principal graces of the divine Spirit are mentioned and compared together, it is directly asserted that "the



greatest of these is charity" (1 Cor. xii. 13); and in the Christian Scriptures generally, but in John especially, Jehovah is presented to the mind of the believer as the God of love. The glorious assertion, "God is love," should be written, not alone on the door-posts of our houses, as in the olden times, but upon the fleshly tables of our hearts; and it is out of such views of the character of the glorious God that the exhortation comes, "Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world," as if all other objects were unworthy of the attention of one who has known the love of God. He claims all our affections of every kind, and to allow them to flow forth upon other objects, however fascinating, is unworthy of the position and dignity of the renewed nature.

2d. *Κόσμος*, "the world," is a word of wide and various signification in the Scripture, and must be very differently expounded in different passages. According to its derivation, it is, or was, used by the Greeks to express "beautiful or elegant arrangement," and in this sense it is found (1 Pet. iii. 3) applied to the ornaments of female attire: then the fertility of the Greek imagination could easily trace the order and harmony which pervade the system of visible nature, and, of course, the proper name for it would be *κόσμος*, which signifies order and beauty united together (Matt. xiii. 35. xxiv. 21. Luke xi. 50. John xv. 2, 5, 24. Heb. iv. 3); hence, as such abstractions are a painful effort of mind, it may easily come to denote that part of the universe which we are most acquainted with, and which is most necessary for our well-being, viz. the *earth*, as the residence of the human family (Matt. xvi. 15. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 2 Pet. iii. 6. John xvi. 21, 28); hence, by an easy transference, it came to signify, not simply the habitation, but the *race of inhabitants* that dwell on the earth, and this signification it frequently has in the New Testament (Matt. v. 14. John i. 29. iii. 16. Rom. iii. 6, 19. Heb. xi. 7. 1 John ii. 2). But forasmuch as the race is fallen from God, and the ways of mankind in general corrupt and polluted, and those who by grace have been enabled to

oppose the current of iniquity are but few, it speedily came to denote, not all mankind universally, but the *wicked part* of mankind as opposed to the little flock of Jesus (John vii. 7. xiv. 17, 19, 27, 31. xvi. 8. 1 Cor. i. 21. 2 Cor. vii. 10). This, then, being the case, and as men are named and characterized by their works, *κόσμος* came to signify the *evils* of our fallen nature, the present corrupt and sin-defiled order of things, as opposed to what *was* and what *will be* hereafter. It expresses the ideas of worthlessness, decay, and corruption; of abounding physical and moral evils; of cares, temptations, pomps, vanities, and sinful desires; and in this sense it is synonymous with *αἰών*, and with the *הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה* of the Hebrews (John xii. 25. xviii. 36. 1 Cor. v. 10. Eph. ii. 2. 1 John iv. 17). In this sense the apostle says, "Love not the world." If, however, you take *κόσμος* in this sense here, it will be difficult to distinguish between "the world" and "the things that are in the world," and, indeed, some expositors insist upon it that the latter is merely expository of the former. I take *κόσμος*, therefore, in this passage, to mean the wicked, ungodly mass of mankind; and if it be asked, "Are we, then, really not to love the wicked unbelieving world? Is it not written, 'God so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but might have everlasting life'?" I answer, There is a two-fold love spoken of in the Scripture which will clear up this difficulty. There is a love based upon pity, which flows forth to relieve the wants of the wretched and miserable. This wonderful affection is attracted by misery and human suffering of every kind and name, and it is the blessed fountain from which all our charitable, benevolent, and missionary institutions flow. This is the inexhaustible bank of benevolence which the God of nature and grace has opened in his world, from which the poor, who are never to cease from the land, also the aged, the maimed, the blind, and the helpless of every kind, are to draw their daily supplies. This love of pity, burning and swelling in the heart of the

redeemed church, it is which sends the Howards of our race into the dungeons of darkness, the Brainerds to savage heathen tribes, and the martyrs for the name of Jesus into the fires of persecution and death. It is seen and felt in the labours, prayers, and supplications of the believing children of God for the Jew, the heathen, and all the sons and daughters of affliction.

“ We weep for those that weep below,  
And, burdened, for the afflicted sigh;  
The various forms of human woe  
Excite our softest sympathy,  
Fill every heart with mournful care,  
And draw out all our souls in prayer.”

In this sense we *love the world*, and in this sense we are to explain John iii. 16 and similar passages. But there is another kind of love altogether different, which is founded upon moral excellence and beauty, and whose effects are of a very different nature. This affection is fed by the qualities of beauty, excellence, and every conceivable perfection. It delights in its object, and seeks to enjoy its fellowship and draw it for ever to itself. The love of pity opened the heavens and sent a Saviour to bear the burden of our woes; and the love of complacency it is which draws up the believing church to the glories of the skies. He pitied the fallen race, and the gift of his Son is the just and adequate expression of his compassion. He delights in the believing church of his Son, and this love of his shall be realized in drawing her up to the fellowship of his throne and glory. In Jesus we see here, as in every thing, the purpose of God revealed; for his work on earth is a work of pity for the miserable, resulting in the forgiveness of sins; and his glorious mediation in heaven is a work of preparing mansions for the righteous, and shall result in their final blessedness and glory. He pities the world, but He delights in the church. Misery draws out his compassion; holiness, truth, and beauty, his love of complacency. Now, when John says “Love not the world,”

his meaning is unmistakeably clear. "You are surrounded with masses of wicked ungodly men; pity them, pray for them, lead them to the Lord Jesus, the Saviour of the world: but do not assort with them, do not make them your chosen companions, do not place your delights in them or in their ways."

3dly. τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, "neither the things that are in the world." These are nothing else than the pomps and vanities of the wicked world, which we renounce at our baptism for the hope of a kingdom and an inheritance that fadeth not away; see Matt. xvi. 26. Mark viii. 36. Luke ix. 35. 1 Cor. iii. 22. Gal. vi. 14. When we look with an inquisitive eye into the principles and practices that bear sway in the families, in the hearts, and in the societies of worldly men, we are struck with the hollowness, and deceitfulness, and even untruthfulness, which characterize them. There is much appearance, but little of the reality of virtue; much that can dazzle the imagination and allure the senses, but nothing that can satisfy the understanding or purify the heart. Worldliness, in its loveliest forms, in the palaces of princes and kings, is but a whited sepulchre, beautiful, indeed, at a distance, but, within, full of rottenness and dead men's bones. And what must this κόσμος have been in the days of John, when the principles of Gospel life and morality were only beginning to influence the surrounding masses of heathenism? Tyranny and cruelty, the love of pleasure and open licentiousness, public profanity, and selfish ambition, prevailed universally, and everywhere brought forth their foul and poisonous fruits (Rom. i. 20—32). These are the principles and practice of the world, and you are forbidden to love them. Your hearts have another and a nobler object. Your souls have not been redeemed with the precious blood of Jesus that they might find satisfaction in such transient vanities. Can ye find your pleasure where He found only pain and the bitter cross? We have cast in our lot with the children of God, and have no more fellowship with the world that persecuted and crucified our Lord. We have higher hopes and nobler aims, and in the



midst of the persecution and torture of the tyrants, as well as in the seductive blandishments of human pomp and splendour, our language is still the same.

“ We ’re not of the world that fadeth away,  
 We ’re not of the night, but children of day :  
 The chains that once bound us by Jesus are riven,  
 We ’re strangers on earth, and our home is in heaven.”

4th. *The consequence.* εἰάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, &c., “ If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” The genitive in the phrase ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς, “ the love of the Father,” and in similar phrases, has, in Scripture, two significations : (1) It means often, and in John this is the prevailing application of the word, “ The love which we bear to the Father ” (see John v. 42. 1 John ii. 5). This is the signification of πίστις with a genitive (Rom. iii. 22. Gal. ii. 16. iii. 22. Eph. iii. 12. Phil. iii. 9. Jas. ii. 1. Rev. xiv. 12. Phil. i. 27. Acts iii. 16. xiv. 9. — Winer’s Gram. Sect. 30). In like manner we must interpret ὑπακοὴ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, “ the obedience of Christ (2 Cor. x. 5), the obedience which is due to Christ. The heathen used the genitive in the same sense. For example : the phrase ὅρκοι θεῶν (Pausan. 8. 7.) means the oaths made to the gods. So the Hebrews use the phrase יְרֵאָתָא יְהוָה (Prov. i. 7), meaning the reverence which we owe to the Lord : compare Jud. ix. 24. In this manner we are to understand our text. The love of the Father is the love which the children bear to Him, and John’s assertion, “ Ye cannot love both the world and the Father,” is precisely the same as the phrase “ Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” (2) For the other use of the genitive in such phrases, see Rom. viii. 35. v. 5. 2 Cor. v. 14, and many others, where the “ love of God ” must necessarily mean the love which He bears to us. Compare the same usage among the Hebrews (1 Sam. xiv. 15. Prov. xx. 2. Is. xxxiv. 5). The principal idea on which the apostle wishes us to dwell is the contrast between the Father and the world, and

the utter impossibility of serving and loving them both. There is a family which belongs to God, which He has taken out of the unbelieving world, which, through the cross of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, He admits into close and eternal communion with himself. They are the children of God, and they walk in his ways. They are no longer strangers and pilgrims, but sons of God, and heirs of the grace of life through the Gospel, and their sonship is manifested by their love to their Father in heaven. If this be wanting, their profession is a pretence; and if any other object takes his place in their hearts, then they have never really known his name, and his love is not in them.

## II. THE END AND ESSENCE OF WORLDLINESS.

This may be taken as the substance of the sixteenth and seventeenth verses, to which we now direct our special attention. The *πᾶν*, *all*, is evidently synonymous with the three expository clauses that follow it, and contains the same sentiment, more strongly asserted, as the *τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ* of verse 15.

1st. Observe here again the contrast between the world and the Father. It is repeated, and more strongly asserted than ever, in order to disabuse the minds of the disciples, and convince them that it was impossible to serve and love both. Worldliness, of every form, in every age of the creation, and in every degree, is utterly opposed to the character and grace of our heavenly Father. This is the general assertion of our text, and the history of the church has proved it true. While the disciples were poor and persecuted for their Master's sake, without worldly honour or earthly recompense, their strength was only in God and the promises of the Saviour, and their zeal, and labours, and love to God and men, made them the founders of the new dispensation, as well as the example and the admiration of all ages. They triumphed, and the immense systems of heathenism and superstition fell before them. The temples of paganism were prostrated, the very foundations

of the old world were overthrown in the mighty convulsion, and in the death and birth-pangs of an old and a new system the religion of the cross ascended the throne of the Cæsars. Now commenced the fatal alliance by which the church, rocked asleep in the arms of Delilah, was shorn of the seven locks of her strength, by which she forgot her place and character as the bride of the Lamb, and became the vile paramour of the kings of the earth (Rev. xvii). This is the history of the Papacy, and the root of the enormous evil was, forgetting the solemn assurance of John—"All that is in the world is not of the Father."

2dly. The form of the Greek sentence here is according to the Hebrew syntax,  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu$  —  $\acute{\omicron}\nu\kappa$  being used for  $\acute{\omicron}\nu\delta\acute{\epsilon}\nu$  or  $\mu\eta\delta\acute{\epsilon}\nu$ , thus "All that is in the world is not of the Father," for "Nothing that is in the world is of the Father." For examples of this usage in the New Testament I refer you to Matt. xxiv. 22. Rom. iii. 20. Eph. v. 5. 1 John ii. 21. John. iii. 15. 1 Cor. i. 29. Acts x. 14. Rev. vii. 1). For the use of  $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\omicron}$ — $\acute{\alpha}\nu$ , in the Old Testament, see Ex. xii. 16. Gen. iii. 1. Ex. x. 15. Lev. iii. 17. Prov. xii. 21. Dan. xi. 37. Compare the other form  $\acute{\alpha}\nu$ — $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\omicron}$  (Deut. viii. 9. Prov. xxx. 30. Ex. xx. 4.—See Winer's Gram. Sect. 26. and Gesen. Thesaur. on the word  $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\lambda\acute{\omicron}$ ).

3dly. The first of the three principal forms of worldly lusts— $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\theta\upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha\iota$   $\kappa\omicron\varsigma\mu\iota\kappa\acute{\alpha}\iota$  (Tit. ii. 12)—mentioned in our text, is  $\eta$   $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\iota\theta\upsilon\mu\acute{\iota}\alpha$   $\tau\eta\varsigma$   $\sigma\alpha\rho\kappa\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ , "the lust of the flesh."  $\Sigma\alpha\rho\acute{\xi}$ , "flesh," like  $\beta\acute{\omicron}\tau\eta\rho$ , is in Scripture the seat of all the sinful affections and desires, whether moral or physical, and is directly opposed to  $\pi\acute{\nu}\epsilon\upsilon\mu\alpha$ , the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit in the soul (Rom. viii. 1, 4, 5, 6—13. Gal. v. 16—24. Rom. vii. 5. Gal. v. 13. Eph. ii. 3. Col. ii. 11, 18. 2 Pet. ii. 10). This is the teeming fountain of vileness from which such streams of corruption overflow the world, and to purify which the cross has been erected and the Holy Spirit given. One naturally thinks here of licentiousness as one of the principal ideas contained in the lust of the flesh, and so indeed it must have been; otherwise one of the

most appalling enormities (see the Roman monuments in the Museum of Naples) in the records of heathenism would be left untouched; but, according to Scripture usage, it includes much more than this. It is opposed to temperance, moderation, contentment, and all the works and operations of the Holy Ghost. Its votaries are the luxurious and the voluptuous, who pamper the finer instincts of their fleshly nature, and find pleasure in all that which the cross of Christ was intended to crucify in them, as well as the semi-brutal reprobates (Rom. xiii. 13) who give themselves body and soul to the devil, that they may work all kinds of iniquity with greediness.

4thly. Then, again, another element in this worldliness is *ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν*, "the lust of the eyes," which includes certainly envy or covetousness (Matt. xx. 15. Mark vii. 22. Prov. xxiii. 6. xxviii. 22), which, without doubt, is one of the basest and most diabolical characteristics of Satan himself. This covetousness, too, has a wider range than many imagine, and is one of the most fruitful causes of bitterness and alienation in the family, in the church, and in the nations of the world, but yet it is far from exhausting the meaning of the phrase "the lust of the eyes." It was through the eye that the first desire of evil entered into the human breast (Gen. iii. 6); and through it, to the present time, the dearest and most irresistible temptations flow in upon and overwhelm the soul (Matt. v. 29). There is no necessity, therefore, in limiting the lust of the eyes in our text to the mere and single principle of covetousness. It takes in a much wider sphere, and exercises over us a more extensive influence. Augustine applied it to the theatrical exhibitions of the heathen, for which Dr. Lücke takes him to task, but surely without reason. Certainly, fifty thousand Romans seated on the galleries of the Colosseum, watching with thrilling emotion the gladiators on the arena in mortal conflict, might be said to be gratifying the lust of the eyes. I say the same of the bull-fights in Spain, to which the population, male and female, are so enthusiastically attached; and indeed every exhibition by which the eye can be



attracted to the mere pomps and vanities of the world. When the eyes of man feast and revel on the gold and the silver which they have collected—on the houses, palaces, and monuments which they have built—on their rich furniture, their extensive gardens, and their brilliant equipages, which distinguish them from the multitudes of their fellow-men—they are, in the mind of our apostle, gratifying the *lust of the eyes*. John says, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Paul advises us to “keep looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith;” and every thing which can draw the eye and the heart from Him is a mere lust of the eye, and is not of the Father, but from the world. This seductive affection has been transferred, in a measure at least, from the world which lieth in the wicked one to the professing church of Christ, which should have all her delights, not in the world, but in the Father. The temples of a Christian worship have been turned into theatres, and the noble simplicity of Christianity has vanished in many nations before the pomp and the splendour of a worldly ritual. Behold their gorgeous buildings, their lofty ceilings, their high altars, their many-coloured hangings, their gilded railings, their coffins, skulls, and old relics, set in diamonds and precious stones; watch the priests and the service, and the fascinating ritual, as the business (it is not worship) proceeds; see the vestments of the priesthood, dazzling with silver and gold, the crosses and pastoral staffs; their intoxicating incense, as it ascends to the sky in clouds, their trains and processions with flags, trumpets, and military music, both in the churches and in the streets; and say, is not all this *the lust of the eyes*? Where is the lust of the eyes to be found on the earth, if not in the ritual and service of the Papal apostacy? It all belongs to the world, and is destined to perish and be forgotten.

5thly. The apostle adds, καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βιοῦ, “and the pride of life,” as the crowning element in worldliness. Here the first thing to be determined is the exact meaning of the word βίος,

and this we are enabled to do from its usage in the Scriptures. In Mark xii. 44. Luke viii. 43. xv. 12, 30. xxi. 4. and 1 John iii. 17, it signifies wealth, substance, or living, and could never, in any sense, correspond with our word *life*. In these passages Beza has either *victus* or *facultates*. In Luke viii. 14. 1 Tim. ii. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 4. and 1 John ii. 16 (which last might be rendered the pride of wealth), it is translated *life*, because the poverty of our language renders it necessary. The Greek ζωή and βίος we must, in these instances, translate by the one word *life* (so our word *world* represents three Greek words), but yet they differ essentially from one another. Βίος is in no instance connected with the future eternal life of man, nor with the πνεῦμα, or spiritual life of the soul, nor even with the moral intellectual existence of mankind. It denotes merely the physical external sentient life as distinguished from the spiritual and eternal life, which are the characteristics of the New-Testament ζωή. Our mere worldly existence, our intercourse with one another in a worldly sense, our modes of living, in which, as sentient beings, we are distinguished from the brutes, all this is βίος according to the apostle John. But what is ἀλαζονεία? The word occurs only in our text and in James iv. 16, where it is rendered *boasting*, and ἀλαζών signifies *a boaster* (Rom. i. 20. 2 Tim. iii. 2). Beza translates ἡ ἀλαζωνεία τοῦ βίου, *fastus vitæ*; Jerome, *superbia vitæ*; and Luther, De Wette, and Kistemaker, *die Hoffart des Lebens*; and Macknight says the exact meaning is *jactantia vitæ*: so that, taken on the whole, our “pride of life” is perhaps the best translation that can be given of it. What, then, does the pride of life mean? It means all that, in the present order of things, which mere worldly men are proud of, and towards which the current of their thoughts runs; all that love of fame, honour, and worldly emoluments which interpenetrates so deeply the masses of mankind. It is the longing after names, and titles, and honourable offices, which seizes the worldly mind with the vehemence of a fever, and unfits it for the service and contemplation of God.

You trace this pride of life in the long and high-sounding titles of which the ancient Romans, in the days of their corruption and degeneracy, were so enthusiastically fond. You trace it in the pomps, dignities, and the sonorous appellations—such as popes, pontiffs, cardinals, ecclesiastical princes, &c.—to which their effeminate descendants are so devoted. This pride of life is seen wherever you hear men boasting of their birth and family connections, their hereditary estates, and the splendour of their ancestry. It is a subtle, impalpable lust, which insinuates itself everywhere, and, like a deadly poison, corrupts all the sources of life, until the unseen realities are banished from the thoughts altogether, the lower instincts of our nature made to triumph over the higher and nobler, and our whole human life and energy concentrated on the things that are not from the Father, but from the world. But is it not right to be proud of these things? My dear brother, the world will love its own, and those that serve and love it shall also have their reward; but for you, who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, God has prepared better things, and things that accompany salvation. Yours is an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away; and your heart and your treasure should be in heaven, where your Redeemer is. Ye are the children of God, and your thoughts should be about the things of the Father, and not those of the world. A thousand cords stronger than death itself should bind your hearts and minds to the perfect service and love of God, and make you entirely and forever his whose love delivered you from the curse and the power of sin. Never, oh never should these worldly lusts, which are the natural element of unrenewed men, sway the minds of those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, whose walk is a walk in light with God in the communion of the Holy Ghost, and over whose heads the promises of the Saviour, like stars in the sky, beckon them onward to life and immortality. Never, oh never should they, or shall they, make that honourable and desirable in our eyes which lies under the curse of sin and death,

which Satan possesses and rules over at his pleasure, which prepared the gall and crown of thorns for our Redeemer, and which, whatever may be its fascination and splendour, is destined to perish and be forgotten, for it is written (verse 17)—

6thly. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Here it is manifest the word κόσμος, "world," has the same meaning as in the preceding verses: it is not the universe, with its suns and systems, nor the globe which we inhabit, nor the human family which was created in the divine image, that is destined to pass away and be forgotten. It is the κόσμος which is opposed to the will and the truth of God which is to pass away and make room for an order of things in which the truth and the glory of Jehovah shall universally and eternally prevail. Let us trace a few of the relations and connections of this perishing κόσμος, that we may have a clearer idea of the apostolic use of the term "world." It is not to be the object of our love (1 John ii. 15). All that is in it is only evil (1 John ii. 16); it is destined to perish (1 John ii. 17); it knoweth not the believing children of God; it hates Christ and all that really belong to Him (1 John iii. 13); Satan is in it, as God is in the believer (1 John iv. 4); the victory that overcomes it is faith (1 John v. 4); believers are not of the world (John xv. 19); it lieth in the wicked one (1 John v. 19). Paul's delineations of it in the Epistles are equally full and striking: its wisdom is foolishness with God (1 Cor. i. 20—33); its sorrow worketh death (vii. 10); its elements are a bondage (Gal. iv. 4); it is crucified to the believer (vi. 14); to walk κατὰ τὸν αἰῶνα κόσμου τούτου, "according to the age of this world," is to walk according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2); the love of it is enmity with God (Jas. iv. 4); the children of God seek to escape its pollutions (2 Pet. ii. 20). Such is the *world* according to the Scriptures, and, consequently, it must be one of our greatest enemies if these statements are true. It is not



strange, therefore, that the apostle should assert that it is destined to pass away ; compare 1 Cor. vii. 31. Jas. i. 10. iv. 4. On the other hand, " He that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." This is a glorious truth, and teaches how to estimate things at their proper value. This great world, with its pomps and delusions, comes in between us and our God, darkening all things, sealing our eyes against the really excellent and beautiful, and perverting our moral sentiments so that we cannot discriminate between the permanent and the transitory. In the endless turmoil and confusion of public wants, and especially wars, national calamities, and national triumphs, the eye and the mind are carried away from the children of God, who, always neglected and often persecuted, seek to do the will of God in sincerity and truth ; yet the eye of God is upon them, and the heart of Jesus yearns over them, and they shall be his when He comes to make up his jewels. They shall remain, and the rest shall perish. The fire of the divine jealousy shall, in the day of vengeance, burn up the wood, and the hay, and the stubble, leaving nothing behind but the pure gold of the sanctuary, on which the image of the refiner shall be engraven in lineaments of ineffaceable beauty. Rooted and grounded in Him, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the saints, in whom are all his delights, shall, washed in his blood and clothed in the robes of his righteousness, enter into the glory and honour of an everlasting kingdom, when the world, with all its pomps and vanities, shall pass away and be forgotten.

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness  
My beauty are, and glorious dress :  
'Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head."

The flock may be a little one, but it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom. They are of more value in *his* sight than all the rest, for they have done his holy will

on earth, and finished the work which He had given them to do. Let us learn, then, not to judge after the outward appearance, but to judge righteous judgment.

### III. "THE ANTICHRIST," ὁ ἀντίχριστος.

Under this comprehensive title we include the substance of the 18th and 19th verses; and the first important question to be asked and answered is—

1st. What is "the last time," ἐσχάτη ὥρα? We observe that ὥρα (our *hour*), often denotes an extended period of time; and, as in our text, it is sometimes put for *time* (Rev. xv. 30), as the LXX. has πᾶσα ὥρα, for בְּכָל-עֵד (Ex. xviii. 22, 26). In John vi. 25 it is applied to the entire dispensation of grace, during which the process of divine quickening proceeds, even as "the day of man" (1 Cor. iv. 3) distinguishes the present age from the world to come, or the day of the Lord. This is the same as ἔσχατος χρόνος, the "last time" (Jude 18); and the "latter times," ὕστεροι καιροὶ (1 Tim. iv. 1); and "the last days," ἐπ' ἐσχάτου τῶν ἡμερῶν (2 Pet. iii. 3); and ἐσχάται ἡμεραι (Jam. v. 3. Heb. i. 1. 2 Tim. iii. 1. Acts ii. 17); and the "last times," ἐπ' ἐσχάτων τῶν χρόνων, and the "last time," ἐν καιρῷ ἐσχάτῳ (1 Pet. i. 5); and the "end of the world," ἐπὶ συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων (Heb. ix. 26; compare Matt. xiii. 39, 40. xxiv. 3. xxviii. 30). Now it is manifest that these expressions can never be applied to the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the Jewish state merely, but are descriptive of the period between the first and second coming of Christ. These are the perilous times when the true Christ remains absent from his church, and the antichrist erects his throne upon the earth, and sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God. There is no necessity, therefore, for taking ἐσχάτη ὥρα, as some have done, in the sense of "a time of extreme peril," contrary as it is both to the meaning of the word and the usage of the Sacred Scriptures. Indeed, there seems to be little difference between the ἐσχάτη ὥρα, the "last time," of John, and "this world," or

age, ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος (Matt. xii. 32. xiii. 22—40. Mark iv. 19. Luke xx. 34. Rom. xii. 2. 1 Cor. i. 20. ii. 6, 8. iii. 18. Eph. i. 24. vi. 12); and the present world, or age, and ὁ νῦν αἰὼν (2 Tim. iv. 10. Tit. ii. 12), and “this present evil world,” ὁ ἀνεστῶς αἰὼν (Gal. i. 4); and “this present time,” ὁ καιρὸς αὐτός (Mark x. 30); and “the present time,” ὁ νῦν καιρὸς (Rom. viii. 18). If there be any difference between them, then the former expression should be taken to denote the latter part of the present dispensation. Both these chronological designations refer, without doubt, to the period or dispensation that is to make way for the great and terrible day of the Lord. This *Hora* of John is the key to explain many references in the Sacred Scriptures, and if it be misapplied, or mis-dated, it brings confusion into the entire chronology of the New Testament. This is the “little while” of the Saviour’s absence, during which the disciples shall have sorrow (John xiv. 3). This is the time of Jacob’s trouble and wrestling—the literal Jacob and the spiritual—until the saints receive the new name, as having prevailed with God, and enter into the promised glory. This is the time of the poor widow’s weeping and crying under the persecutions of her adversary until the just judge comes and gives her deliverance. This is the time during which the Jerusalem that now is is in bondage, with her children, waiting for the Jerusalem which is above, which is free, which is the mother of us all. This is the *Hora* during which the Church of Jesus, like a travailing woman, is in pain, longing to be delivered, when the man-child is born into the world, and she shall forget all her sorrows in the presence of her returning Lord (John xvi. 19—23). This is the time called the night season in Scripture, when the Sun, viz. Jesus Christ, is absent, and the stars, viz. the pastors (Rev. i. 20), are shining in the sky; when Satan goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour: but the eternal day cometh when the stars shall be lost in the splendour of the Sun of Righteousness, and the lion, which is the devil and Satan, shall be shut up in his

den for a thousand years. This is the time when the wheat and the tares grow in the same field; the sheep and the goats flock together; the wheat and the chaff are inextricably mingled; when the good fish and the bad fish are drafted in the same drag-net to the shore; when the wise and the foolish virgins travel on together; the time of the churches' fasting and sorrow; when the Bridegroom is taken away from them; and when Satan and antichrist, their confederated enemies, shall establish their dominion both in the world and in the professing christendom. Without entering farther into this chronological discussion, we may safely come to the following conclusion, to which I think the impartial and candid inquirer will yield his consent. (1) That all those Scripture expressions already quoted, such as "the last time," "the last days," "the perilous times," "the present evil world," &c., refer to the whole period between the first and second advent, though some of them may have a special reference to one part of that period. (2) That the character of this whole period is evil. It is a state of conflict and warfare between the two kingdoms that have divided the race from the beginning, and which becomes only hotter and fiercer towards the end. (3) That for the Church of Christ to expect peace, and tranquillity, and freedom from all liability to persecution, while Satan is seeking to devour the people of God like a roaring lion, and the antichrist of the Scriptures is still reigning, is contrary to the Scriptures (2 Thes. i. 5-8), and a fatal delusion, which may lead to fearful perplexity and confusion. (4) That the attempt, therefore, made by some to bring in the latter-day glory somewhere in the middle, or towards the end of this period, is a grand chronological mistake for which there is not one hint in any of the Scripture passages which refer to it. On the contrary, the days remain evil until the end, the wheat and the tares grow together until the harvest, and the external rest, and prosperity, and triumph of the church are to be found in the coming and kingdom of the Lord. This was, and is, the fatal error of the



Papacy from which the whole monstrous system took its rise. They would have a glorious, reigning, triumphant church before the time. (5) The error of many Germans, on the other hand, with regard to these times of trouble, is no less serious, for it touches the truthfulness and integrity of the word of God. They quote a multitude of passages which speak of the shortness of the time, the nearness of the glory, and the speedy coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in his kingdom; and from the length of the time that has *really* intervened, they conclude that the apostles and the primitive church were deceived. Usteri gives the following collection of passages—1 John ii. 18, 28. iii. 2 (compare John xiv. 3, 18. xvi. 16); Jude 18; Jas. v. 7, 8; 1 Pet. i. 4—7. iv. 5—7, 13. v. 4; 2 Pet. i. 14, 16, 19. iii. 3—13; Rev. i. 3. xii. 12. xxii. 10; Acts i. 6—14. iii. 20, 24; Heb. ix. 28. x. 25, 37; Rom. ii. 16. v. 2. vii. 17—30. xiii. 11, 12; 1 Cor. i. 7, 8. iii. 13. iv. 5. v. 5. xiii. 12. xv. 20—58; 2 Cor. i. 14. iii. 7—18. v. 1—10; Eph. iv. 30. vi. 8; Phil. i. 6, 10. ii. 16. iii. 11, 20, 21. iv. 5; Col. i. 27 (compare i. 5, 23). iii. 3, 4, 24; 1 Thess. i. 3, 10. ii. 10. iii. 13. iv. 15. v. 2, 4, 23; 2 Thess. i. 6—10, 19. ii. 1—12; 1 Tim. vi. 14; 2 Tim. i. 10, 12, 18. iii. 1. iv. 1, 8; Tit. i. 2. ii. 13. iii. 7. All these, and similar passages, are embodied together, and represented as referring to the current popular delusion of the Jewish nation, to which the apostles and primitive church lent their sanction. To all such we reply simply, “It is not yet proved that the sentiment was Jewish; and much less is it proved that the expectation was a delusion: none of the passages quoted, nor any one passage in the New Testament, teaches that the coming of the Lord and the destruction of antichrist were to take place in the apostolic age, though all these, and many other Scriptures, teach that the apostles and primitive churches did then, as we ought to do now, wait for, long for, hope for, and pray for the blessed hope and glorious appearance of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ. So much have we to say about “the last time” (ἐσχάτη ὥρα), mentioned in our text.

2dly. The apostle says "Ye have heard that antichrist shall come (ὅτι ὁ ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται), and even now are there many antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time." In this passage the apostle distinguishes between "the antichrist who was expected to come and the many antichrists who were come already." These many antichrists require little or no consideration, as it is utterly impossible to discover who or what they were, or even the doctrines which they taught. Many suppose them to have been Jewish false teachers, and others refer them to the Gnostic heresies, against which the apostle is supposed to have written both his Gospel and his Epistles. As applied to them, the word "antichrist" must be taken in the sense of "opposed to Christ," and, as such, all false teachers of every kind might be truly called antichrists. With regard to ὁ ἀντίχριστος, the "antichrist" of the New Testament, it will be necessary to mention a few particulars. (1) The apostle John, who alone uses the name "antichrist," asserts that he shall deny both the Father and the Son (1 John ii. 22); and that he shall reject the doctrine and work of the incarnate Son of God (1 John iv. 1—3). (2) In 2 Thess. ii. 1—12 the following facts are taught concerning antichrist:—First, it is to be in the centre of a great system of apostacy (verse 3) that the antichrist is to rule; it is not an imposture like Islam, but an apostacy from the faith of the Gospel. Secondly, This system is to bring forth the man of sin and son of perdition, probably as its representative and head. Thirdly, He shall exalt himself (ἐπὶ πάντα λεγόμενον Θεὸν ἢ σέβασμα) over all that is called god or that is worshipped, viz. over all the delegated gods, kings, princes, and emperors of the earth. He shall claim to be the proprietor of the world and the source of all legitimate authority among men. Fourthly, He is to be an ecclesiastical person, and not a royal or imperial power, for he is to sit in the temple of God, viz. the visible church of God, shewing himself ruling as a god. Some, indeed, pretend that ναὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ must refer to the temple at Jerusalem, and not to the church; but this is false. Paul is

speaking about the church of God, and not about the temple of Jerusalem ; but *ἱερόν* is the word which always signifies a literal temple in the New Testament. In this sense it is used about seventy times, and it never signifies any thing else. *Ναὸς*, on the contrary, is often applied to the church of Christ (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. ii. 21). Had the apostle intended the Jerusalem temple, he would have written *ἱερόν*, and not *ναὸς*. Fifthly, It is to be a *mysterious* system, a mystery of iniquity, as opposed to the Gospel, which is the mystery of godliness. Sixthly, His coming is to be with all the signs, wonders, and energy of the power of Satan (verses 9 and 10). Seventhly, The followers of antichrist shall believe, adopt, and defend the strong delusion of lies. Eighthly, and finally, the diabolical person and system of antichrist shall be destroyed by the second coming of Christ (verse 8). (3) In 1 Tim. iv. 1—7 the characteristics of the apostacy are the following:—First, It shall be a departure from the faith of Jesus—a horrible corruption called doctrines of devils. Secondly, It shall be a system of apostacy in which lies and hypocrisy shall prevail. Thirdly, These apostates shall, under the pretence of greater holiness, forbid to marry, and command to abstain from meats which God has created to be received with thanksgiving. (4) There are other passages which bear on the subject, which we have no time here to mention, among which those which refer to the Babylon of the Apocalypse deserve particular attention (Rev. xvii. Read and compare Rev. xviii. 3. xix. 19. xiv. 3. xiii. 1—18. Dan. vii. 25). Let this very brief description of antichrist, as he is delineated in the New Testament, suffice for the present. The nineteenth verse shews that the many antichrists that were already come were persons in the church who had apostatized from the faith also ; so that, from first to last, and in every form and age, *apostacy* is the essence of the antichristian system. This being the case, the word *antichrist* will necessarily take the meaning of “one ruling in the stead of Christ,” and not that of a professed and open enemy of

Christ; and history has painfully and terribly verified this application of the word.

#### IV. "THE UNCTION FROM THE HOLY ONE" (χρίσμα).

In order to meet the temptations of the devil and the seductions of the present antichrists and the great coming antichrists, the Lord, to whom the end was known from the beginning, has provided for his saints the gifts and the graces of the Holy Spirit; and hence the apostle says, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things."

1st. *Χρίσμα*, *anointing*, occurs only in this chapter. The reference is, no doubt, to the anointing of the kings and priests in the Old-Testament times, by which they were solemnly set apart to their offices. Paul would undoubtedly in this place have used *χάρισμα* (1 Cor. vii. 7. Rom. i. 2. 1 Cor. i. 7. Rom. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 1—9), which refers to the same thing—the *gifts of the Holy Spirit*; but as John never, in this Epistle, uses the word *Lord* (Κύριος), which name suits the Saviour as the distributor of *gifts*, he uses the word *χρίσμα*, "anointing," which is more in keeping with *Χριστός*, "the anointed," the name of the Redeemer, which, in our Epistle, he prefers. We shall not here refer to the typical anointings of the Old Testament, but we shall trace the doctrine of the anointing of the Spirit, (for the *χρίσμα* here means the Holy Spirit,) in a few of its more important features as it is seen in the New Testament. In the person of the Saviour we can trace three developements of the power of the Holy Spirit, viz. his spiritual generation (Luke i. 35), whereby He escaped the original sin of our nature and became the first-born, the Leader and the Head of all that are regenerated of the Holy Ghost. Secondly, in his public baptism, wherein He was qualified for the mighty and miraculous ministry whose records we have in the Gospel; and from Him, as the baptized and anointed Head, all the gifts of his Spirit descend upon the members of his body for evermore.



Thirdly, after his resurrection, as He ascended up on high, He received the immeasurable fulness of the Holy Ghost (Acts ii. 33), in our immortalized and glorified nature, to be distributed to the hungry and thirsty nations in pentecostal fulness, according to his royal pleasure, for evermore. As the ascended and glorified man, filled with the Holy Spirit, and in closest communion with God, He is the first-fruits of the harvest, the first-born of the family, the type and the example to the angels and the whole creation of that which his people are predestinated to be. Thus, in every conceivable way, the believing children of God stand related to Jesus their anointed Redeemer. He was generated, and they are regenerated by the same Spirit. They share his baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire; and in the mansions of the blest above they shall be united to Him in the unutterable fulness and fellowship of the eternal Spirit of God. This anointing which we have from the Holy One is the bond of all Christian fellowship. The unity of the church consists in this, that one person, even the Holy Spirit, dwells in them all, and pervades them all with one common life, like the blood in the body, or the sap that flows in the vine. This may also be the unity of the godhead (John xvii. 21). The Father and the Son are one because the Spirit is common to them both, and the believers in the name of the Redeemer are one because the Holy Spirit is common to them all.

“Veni Sancte Spiritus,  
 Reple tuorum corda fidelium.  
 Et tui in eis ignem accende,  
 Qui per diversitatem linguarum cunctarum  
 Gentes in unitate fidei congregasti.  
 Alleluia ! Alleluia !

2dly. ὁ ἅγιος, “the Holy One.” This is the title of our Lord Jesus Christ to distinguish Him absolutely from all other men,

who, however they may be sanctified, and, in Scripture, called saints, to distinguish them from the ungodly world, can never make any pretension to the immaculate holiness of Christ. But it is not the name in this verse, but the glorious office of Christ, to which we should turn our attention. He is the dispenser of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. From Him the beloved disciples to whom John wrote received the unction which taught them all things. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and the gifts of his mercy and love are as free and abundant as in the apostolic age. No needy, ignorant creature that has heard of his name as the Holy One, and his office to give the unction of the Spirit to all that ask Him, has a right to complain of ignorance, emptiness, and alienation of affection, for there is a Saviour ready to help if he will but ask his assistance; there is a fountain open if he will but drink of its streams. Nor should the poor trembling sinner be afraid to approach the mercy-seat in heaven, for God is seated on the throne of grace, and Jesus, our great elder brother, intercedes for us at the right-hand of the Majesty on high. In Him, as our risen and glorified Redeemer and Head, we have the fulness of spiritual gifts which God intends for his church; and the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come: and whosoever will, let him come, and take the water of life freely." Salvation is all of free grace, but your condemnation is your own work, and you will find it so in the end if ye refuse his gracious invitations.

"Come, ye weary sinners, come,  
All who groan beneath your load,  
Jesus calls his wanderers home;  
Hasten to your pardoning God.

Come, ye guilty spirits oppressed,  
Answer to the Saviour's call;  
Come, and I will give you rest;  
Come, and I will save you all."

3dly. The consequence of this divine unction is *καὶ οἴδατε πάντα*, and ye know all things. The meaning is, "I need not describe the wiles of the enemy, nor the seductions of antichrist, for the Holy Spirit has enabled you "to detect and resist their seductions;" or, the "all things" may be taken in the sense of all things necessary for your present and future salvation. John uses the same expression in his Gospel (xiv. 26)—"But the Holy Ghost (the Comforter), whom the Father will send in my name, he shall *teach you all things*, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." The offices of the Divine Spirit are various in the work of sanctification, and one of the principal of these is, to enlighten the eyes of our hearts with the knowledge of the Gospel of Christ. He begins with *teaching*; then He brings all things to our *remembrance* (John xiv. 26); then He bears *witness* to Christ (John xv. 27); then He *convinces* us of sin, and righteousness, and judgment (John xvi. 8); then He *guides* us into all truth, and shews us *things to come* (John xvi. 13); and the one end of all his work, however manifold and various it may be, is to *glorify* the Lord Jesus Christ (John xvi. 14). May we, dear brother, have this unction from the Holy One! Without his presence our hearts remain cold and dead, and all efforts after peace, and comfort, and joy are vain. He is the Teacher and the Comforter sent by God to bring us to the Lord Jesus the Saviour, and keep us in the fellowship of his love.

"Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire,  
 Let us thine influence prove;  
 Source of the old prophetic fire,  
 Fountain of light and love.

Come, Holy Ghost, (for, moved by thee,  
 The prophets wrote and spoke),  
 Unlock the truth, thyself the key,  
 Unseal the sacred book.

Expand thy wings, celestial Dove,  
Brood o'er our nature's night ;  
On our disordered spirits move,  
And let there now be light.

God, through himself, we then shall know,  
If thou within us shine ;  
And sound, with all thy saints below,  
The depths of love divine."



## CHAPTER VII.

Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης, εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός; οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος, ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν Πατέρα καὶ τὸν Υἱόν.

Πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν Υἱόν, οὐδὲ τὸν Πατέρα ἔχει.

Ἵμεῖς οὖν ὁ ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἐν ὑμῖν μενέτω· ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνῃ ὁ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ μενεῖτε.

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία, ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπηγγείλατο ἡμῖν, τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον.

Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανώντων ὑμᾶς.

Καὶ ἡμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὁ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἐν ὑμῖν μένει, καὶ οὐ χρειᾶν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκῃ ὑμᾶς· ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτὸ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων, καὶ ἀληθές ἐστι, καὶ οὐκ ἔστι ψεῦδος· καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μενεῖτε ἐν αὐτῷ.

Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: [*but*] *he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life.

These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Καὶ νῦν, τέκνία, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ· ἵνα ὅταν φανερωθῇ, ἔχωμεν παρρησίαν, καὶ μὴ αἰσχυνθῶμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ.

Ἐὰν εἰδῇτε ὅτι δίκαιός ἐστι, γινώσκετε ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, ἐξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται.

And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

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THE apostle proceeds with the subject of the antichrist. The great antichrist is indeed not yet revealed, but there are many antichrists already in the world to prepare his way. The best safeguard against the seductions of the antichrists is the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the unction from Jesus the Holy One. This light, and life, and communion in the Holy Ghost will enable you to detect the delusions of the seducers and deceivers who seek to draw away your souls from the simplicity of Christ.

In Him there is safety and peace. Consider now, further, the character of antichrist (verse 22).

I. *The liar.* Who is the liar (ὁ ψεύστης) but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? The first thing, therefore, to be attended to in the verse is the *name* here given to antichrist. He is *the liar*, and this is one of his most awful characteristics, that his traffic is in lies. Jesus is the Way, the *Truth*, and the Life. He is the glorious centre of the great system of revealed truth, and the antichrist is the centre of the great apostacy in which the dominant element is falsehood and lies. Satan is the ψεύστης, "liar," from the beginning, and antichrist is the embodiment and manifestation of all diabolical energy and cunning. This term, ψεύστης, denotes a false one, a deceiver, an apostate (see John iv. 44, 45. 1 Tim. i. 10. Tit. i. 12. 1 John i. 10. ii. 4. iv. 20. v. 10. Rom. iii. 4). So כִּזְבִּי (Prov. xix. 22). The meaning is, that antichrist will proceed from the bosom of the Christian church, now fearfully corrupted and apostatized, and, by means of false doctrines, lying wonders, imposing pretensions, and external false appearances of sanctity and excellence, delude and entangle his votaries into his diabolical net. Hence his coming shall be ἐν πάσῃ ἀπάτῃ τῆς ἀδικίας, "in all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish" (2 Thess. ii. 10), so that they shall be brought to believe his lie (2 Thess. ii. 11). This is his name and his nature. The pure truth of God's holy word, antichrist shall never tolerate, but mingle and corrupt it with his lying delusions, and, prevented in this, he will persecute it unto the death. He is the false teacher, the false pretended Christ, who, taking the place of the Redeemer, will seek by his lies and delusions to exercise the royal priestly function of Christ, both over the church and the world. It is impossible for the impartial interpreter of the word not to recognise in the great system of the papacy this characteristic of lies and falsehood. Is there one single truth of the Old or New Testament which the papists have not corrupted? None. The

unity of God, the unity of the mediation of Christ, the communion of the Holy Ghost, the doctrines of grace, the Scripture doctrines of heaven and hell, and every other truth of God, are corrupted and mingled with an infinite mass of falsehood and lies by that apostate and scandalous church. Wherever, in the circle of the professing church, *lies* are most abundant, there you may look for the antichrist of the apostle John. 2dly. He is called, also, “the man of sin” (ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς ἀμαρτίας), in contradistinction to Jesus, who is the Righteous One (2 Thess. ii. 3); and this name is nearly the same as “the liar,” because all sin was introduced into the world by a *lie*, and by *lies* alone is the kingdom of antichrist and Satan maintained in the world. But, 3dly. Antichrist is to be an ecclesiastical person, a false apostle, who is to be to the whole church, and for the ages of his rule, what Judas was to Jesus and the eleven apostles, viz. a traitor and a persecutor, and hence he is called ὁ υἱὸς τῆς ἀπωλείας, “the son of perdition” (2 Thess. ii. 3; compare John xvii. 12). 4thly. I shall mention only another name of antichrist, viz. ὁ ἄνομος (2 Thess. ii. 8), “the wicked or lawless one,” who shall think to change times and laws, and abrogate the whole Gospel economy, especially the law of love, by his own self-imposed ordinances and decrees. He shall be unrestrained by law; he shall impose laws upon his followers indeed; yet, the very principle of his being, which he shall contend for to the death, is, that he is above all law, uncontrollable, infallible; whose word can make vice virtue, and create obligations which others are bound on pain of damnation to fulfil. This is the culminating point of the *liar’s* pretensions.

II. The great truth, that *Jesus is the Christ*, is the fundamental doctrine of the New Testament, and this is the very truth which antichrist shall deny, and thereby prove himself to be the liar of the Christian Scriptures to whom the apostle John refers in our text—“Who is the liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ.” The glorious sentence, “Jesus is the Christ,”



is the living fountain of truth from which, in a thousand various streams, all Gospel truth proceeds. He is the Christ, viz. the long-promised deliverer of the ancient people of God, the Messias, the King of Israel, in whom all the nations were to be blessed, to whom the hopes of the species were directed from the beginning, and in whom the purposes of Jehovah and the blessedness of the creation shall be realized and manifested for ever. A thousand promises, like stars in the night, pointed to Him, and a thousand types, and figures, and symbols were fulfilled in his coming. The mighty system of prophecy, including the whole period of the church's history, and embracing, in nearer or more distant relations, all the nations of the earth, is concentrated in his person and personal offices; so that the fulfilment of it in providence and grace, in mercy and in judgment, during the various dispensations of time, is but the manifestation, as we more or less need it, of his manifold fulness. The three offices of Prophet, Priest, and King meet in the *Christ*, the anointed of God; so that, for our ignorance, our guilt, and our bondage, He has made an ample and sufficient provision. All names, attributes, and relations which could endear Him to us or connect Him with our wretchedness and helplessness, are united in Him, and in such a way blended with the glories of his divine nature, that the humble, trembling sinner can have confidence and joy even in the presence of a holy God. He is the *Christ*, and in Him all divine fulness dwells for the wants of a fallen world, so that every one who really believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. The coming antichrist will in words, or more probably in fact and by his actions, deny and nullify the great fact and central truth that *Jesus is the Christ*. He will deny and nullify the finished work of Christ by establishing the dogmas of human merit. He will deny and nullify the mediation of Christ by the worship and intercession of the saints. He will nullify and deny the glorious and perfect work of Jesus Christ on the cross for the remission of sins, by the invention of purgatorial fires to do, in another world, what his pardoning mercy

could not do in this. This great and notable liar will, while in the church, and surrounded by the names and habiliments of the Christian faith (2 Thess. ii. 4), deny and nullify all the doctrines of Christ by his detractions, additions, and manifold perversions. He will pretend to take the place of Christ (*ἀντί-χριστος*), while he is in the seat of Satan. He will pretend to be the fountain of all saving truth, while yet he is *ὁ ψεύστης*, “the false one and the liar.” He will claim to be *ἄνομος*, “without and above all law,” while he lays his heavy yoke on the neck of many nations, and even the fundamental doctrine which he denies, and which lays the axe to the root of all his pretensions, is the truth that *Jesus is the Christ*. Believe this, and you have no need of the delusions of antichrist, his lying wonders, his self-imposed restrictions, his dispensations and indulgences; for this glorious truth will make you free. You have the Christ, and need no one in his stead; you have peace and pardon in his blood, and can dispense with the pretensions of the liar.

III. He is antichrist, *ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν Πατέρα καὶ τὸν Υἱὸν*, “who denieth the Father and the Son.” This does not mean that antichrist shall deny the existence of the Father and the Son. The idea of the New-Testament antichrist is not that of a notable, public, professed enemy of God and of Christ, boiling with fury against Christianity, like Julian or Voltaire, and labouring to root out the name of Jesus from the earth, but that of an apostate Christian, a false teacher of Christianity, a pseudo-Christ, who seems to venerate the Redeemer, but, in reality, denies both the Father and the Son. The proofs that antichrist is not to be a professed enemy of Christ, but a professed friend, are many, of which I may state the following: 1st. John makes the antichrist to have the same character as the many antichrists already in the church, who were to prepare the way for him; but these were apostate Christians (1 John ii. 19), and therefore the coming antichrist whom John expected was also to be an apostate. 2dly. If antichrist

were, as some at present pretend, only a public enemy of God, and a professed enemy of the name of Jesus, it would require no unction from the Holy One to detect him (1 John ii. 20). 3dly. If antichrist were a public, professed enemy of Christ, how could he sit in the temple of God, or claim superiority over all delegated Gods? How could his system be called apostacy and a mystery of iniquity? All this is possible and credible only when we contemplate antichrist as taking the place of Christ, pretending to be his vicar and successor, and, under the name of God and Christ, exercising his fearful dominion over the bodies and souls of men. This is a mystery of iniquity. He is, in reality, the liar and the lawless one; yet, surrounded with the names, and claiming the authority of Christ, he pretends to be the light of the world, while yet, in reality, denying both the Father and the Son, he sits in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God, and claiming, as the vicegerent of God, to rule over the whole church of God. The denying the Father and the Son is only an enlargement of the previous statement that he would deny the doctrine that *Jesus is the Christ*, which includes in it the germs of all other Christian doctrines. The ideas of *Father* and *Son* are so associated together in the Christian theology, that they can never be separated; and they are both summed up and manifested in the sentence, "Jesus is the Christ," which includes the correlative ideas of anointer and anointed, sender and sent one, giver and gift. By nullifying the work of the incarnate Son he will deny also the doctrines of the Father that sent Him; by pretending to hold the place and office of Christ this liar and pseudo-Christ will, in effect, be denying the doctrine and revelation of God himself. I see no evidence that this liar and antichrist has any reference to the destruction of the Jewish polity, and the capture of Jerusalem. All that has been written on this mode of explaining the text is based on the false position, that John, by ἐσχάτη ᾠρα, "the last time," meant the taking of the Holy City by Titus Vespasian. The ancient idea that anti-

christ must be a *single person*, and not an apostate system headed up by a succession of single persons, has been revived with great zeal and learning in our own times; but the argument has no convincing force. The word מָשִׁיחַ, "Messias," or Anointed, is applied not only to individuals, but to the whole Jewish nation (1 Chron. xvi. 22. Ps. cv. 15); the word *Christ* is, in one passage (1 Cor. xii. 12), at least, applied to the whole redeemed church as well as the Head; the single term *priest* signifies the whole priestly dynasty of the Jews (Lev. i. 15. iv. 3, 5); the four empires of Daniel are represented by four *kings* (Dan. vii. 17); the four *metals* of Daniel's image represent four successive empires, and not four individual kings only; so the four beasts are four *kings*, viz. *kingdoms* (Dan. vii. 17), that shall arise out of the earth; and the ram and the he-goat signify the kingdoms of Persia and Greece (Dan. viii. 21). Why, then, should the word antichrist not denote the whole succession of the papal apostacy? There is nothing, either in the language or the nature of things, to prevent it, and the usage of Scripture is strongly in favour of it. The attempts, therefore, of the modern school of literal interpreters of prophecy to deliver the papacy from the arrows of divine vengeance are vain and ineffectual.

IV. The words printed in italics in verse 23 are not found in the Greek text used by us, but they are admitted to be genuine by all the best authorities. The doctrine contained in the verse is, that the Father and the Son are *one*; and the apostle, leaving the special subject of antichrist, asserts generally "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father; but he that acknowledges the Son hath the Father also." It is in vain to pretend that you love and adore the Father if you vilify and reject the Son whom He sanctified and sent to be the Saviour of the world. The Father hath borne testimony to the Son through prophets, apostles, and voices from heaven; He has sealed Him (John vi. 27) as the steward and ad-



ministrator of his heavenly household ; He has sent Him into our nature ; filled Him with His own Spirit ; raised Him from the dead, and exalted Him to the throne of universal dominion. How, then, is it possible to honour the Father while you dishonour the Son ? It is impossible. They are one in testimony, one in love to the human race, one in counsel and working, and one in the unity of the divine nature. They have the same names, titles, and attributes ; they claim the same love, obedience, and adoration ; they are unitedly and equally the God of baptism and benediction, from whom we receive the new life at the beginning, and by whom it is sustained to the end. We say, with Ambrosius,

“O lux beata trinitas,  
Et principalis unitas,  
Jam sol recedit igneus ;  
Infunde lumen cordibus.

Te mane laudum carmine,  
Te deprecamur vesperi,  
Te nostra supplex gloria  
Per cuncta laudet sæcula.”

Which can never be so nobly translated as in the immortal lines of Bishop Ken—known as the finest metrical doxology in our language—embodying the very spirit of Scripture and the universal church—

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

John's doctrine has been verified in the history of the Christian church ; for, from the earliest ages, the life and activity of the people of God have ever depended on the doctrine that the Father and the Son are one. Many have denied the Son, but

they soon shewed themselves to be without the Father also. The doctrine of the godhead of Christ is no subtle and attractive speculation of religious idealists, but the rock of truth, on which the church of God is built; and if it be removed, the entire edifice must fall to pieces. Without the deity of Christ there can be no atonement for sin; and the entire sacrificial system of the Jews, and the Epistle to the Hebrews, become empty verbiage. Sin, in that case also, ceases to be very sinful; the doctrine of the Fall becomes mythical; the work of the Holy Ghost in the sanctification of the soul becomes unnecessary; and thus the entire structure of the orthodox faith crumbles to the dust. Unitarianism, as it is called, has no permanent vigour; and, except as a victorious, conquering, persecuting power, in the case of the Vandals under Genseric, and the Saracens under the first Caliphs, it has never put forth the least vigour of any kind. In England it barely maintains its precarious existence; in America it is melting rapidly away; and what remains in both countries is becoming more and more tinged with infidelity every day. "Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also." This, however, contains another great truth, viz. that the Father is to be known only through the Son; and he that will not receive the knowledge of the nature and character of Jehovah through the Son, who is the Revealer and Mediator, can never, by any possibility, attain to it (John i. 14, 18. iv. 23. xiv. 6, 7. viii. 19. xii. 45. Col. i. 15. Heb. i. 3. John xvi. 3. Matt. xi. 27). The expression ἔχει τὸν Πατέρα, to *have the Father*, is equally simple and significant, and answers to the Hebrew form לֹא הָאֵל, and the Arabic لا اله الا الله, and denotes full possession and appropriation of Him who is the root and sustainer of all things; as Luther has beautifully said, "Wer Christum hat, der hat Alles; und wer Christum nicht hat, der hat gar Nichts"—"He that has Christ hath all; and he that has not Christ, has nothing." To *have God* is to have fellowship with

Him ; to have our delights, joys, and hopes centered in Him ; to have given up all things for Him ; to cleave to Him, and serve Him alone, as our chosen portion for ever.

V. The apostle now (ver. 24) warns them against apostacy, and recommends them to continue *stedfast* in the faith of the Gospel. That which they had received from the beginning can be nothing else than the doctrines and hopes of the Christian faith, including the great principles which he had already mentioned, such as the doctrine of the Logos (i. 1—3) ; the advocacy and mediation of Christ (ii. 1, 2) ; the new commandment of love (ii. 8) ; the principle of separation from the world (ii. 15—17) ; and especially the unction from the Holy One, by which they knew all things (ii. 20). Be stedfast in the doctrines which ye have received from the very beginning of the Gospel dispensation, and be not carried away by the seductions of the world or the delusions of antichrist. Observe, there is a reciprocal (*μέμειν*) *abiding* contained in the verse, the one being the condition of the other ; thus, “ If that remain in you, ye shall remain in the Son and in the Father ;” in other words, “ If the Gospel of God remains in you, ye shall remain in the God of the Gospel.” But how are believers *ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ* ? Observe, first, however we may understand the expression *in Christ*, or *in God*, it is frequent in the Scripture (John xv. 2, 4, 5. vi. 56. xiv. 20. Rom. xvi. 7, 11. 1 Thess. i. 1. 1 John iii. 6, 24. iv. 13, 15, 16).

1st. To be *ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ*, “ in the Son,” signifies our union with Him in the faith of the Gospel. We are in Him by faith, when we become members of his redeemed church. This union is sealed outwardly by baptism, and inwardly by the communion of the Holy Ghost, and symbolized by the Vine and its Branches, the Head and the Members, the Foundation and the Stones in the Living Temple, the Bridegroom and the Bride. This union with the Son of God arises naturally out of the incarnation, by which He was constituted the new Head

and second Adam of the race, in whom all that believe might find stability and strength. By virtue of this union it is that the saints are borne aloft over the waves of this world's trials and afflictions; rendered victorious through faith over the world, and the flesh, and the devil; and finally carried triumphantly, in spite of sin, death, and the grave, into the blessedness and glory of the heavenly mansions. But here this union is presupposed, and the apostle speaks of their *continuing* in the Son and in the Father. Undoubtedly, the believer is not a passive instrument in the work of sanctification, but a willing agent in the hand of the Holy Spirit; so that, while salvation is entirely from God, and the reception of eternal life owing to the operation of the Spirit of God, yet the responsibility of receiving or rejecting, of abiding in Christ or departing from Him, is placed in the human will; as the Saviour Himself says, "Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life." You are not, therefore, to conclude, that, being *in Christ*, you are relieved from all responsibility in the future; for the same faith and love, the same ardour of heavenly affections and burning zeal for the Lord which marked your union with Him in the beginning, are equally necessary even unto the end; the manna must be daily eaten: on the contrary, the union should ever become closer, the fruits of righteousness daily riper and more abundant, the hopes arising out of this *indwelling* ever brighter, until faith yields to fruition, and the soul, enlarged into the dimensions of her heavenly condition, enters into the communion of the redeemed above.

"Away with our sorrow and fear,  
We soon shall recover our home;  
The city of saints shall appear,  
The day of eternity come.

From earth we shall quickly remove,  
And mount to our native abode,  
The house of our Father above,  
The palace of angels and God."



Then the union with our Saviour will be perfect, and neither sin nor death shall disturb our tranquillity any more. Oh, surely we should cultivate this union with Him more and more! Holy Jesus, let us live, and labour, and die in Thee, and for Thee alone!

2dly. What is the meaning of remaining ἐν τῷ Πατρὶ, “in the Father?” The children of God should be able to answer that. The Prodigal Son knew the meaning of it when his father’s arms were around him. We remain in the Father when we abide in the fellowship of his love, and seek, as his dear children, to do his holy will. It is true that our abiding in Him can be proved, and manifested, and realized only by our abiding in his Son, the divine Mediator, who is the Way, and the Truth, and the Life. All that we know of the Father is through Him, “For no man hath seen God at any time: the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him” (John i. 18). This being *in the Father*, and *remaining in the Father*, is the highest, holiest expression of the unutterable fellowship of the soul with God: it is the source of what is called the walk, life, and triumph of faith; the blessed fountain from which flow our peace of mind, our fellowship with God in prayer, and all our longings after life and immortality. We approach God as our reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, and our sweetest moments on the earth are in communion with Him.

VI. ἡ ἐπαγγελία—ἡ ζωὴ ἡ αἰώνιος, “The promise which He hath promised (ver. 25) us is eternal life.” As to the form of the sentence, we would naturally have expected the nominative ἡ ζωὴ in apposition to the promise, ἡ ἐπαγγελία, instead of the accusative in apposition to the relative sentence ἣν αὐτός ἐπηγγείλατο, “which He hath promised us.” This is another remarkable example of what is called attraction in the Greek language (see 1 Cor. x. 16. John vi. 29. Mark vi. 16—See Winer’s Gram. §. 63). The αὐτός, *he*, may refer either to the Father or

the Son, though, I think, more naturally to the Father, who, generally speaking, is the promiser, as Jesus, the Saviour, is the promise-fulfiller (1 John v. 12). The full sentence, as I understand it, is the following, "This is the promise that God hath given us, even eternal life in Jesus Christ his Son." The giver is God, and the channel through which it comes is the Mediator. But what is this eternal life? It is the inexpressible blessedness, joy, and glory which the redeemed shall have with their God and Redeemer in the kingdom of heaven for ever (1 Cor. ii. 9. Rom. vi. 23. Matt. xix. 29). In opposition to the state of sin, misery, and alienation from God, in which we now are, it is called *life*; and in opposition to the transient, unsubstantial nature of earthly things, it is *eternal* life. We owe it, and every thing else, simply to the promise of God, which He has given us freely in Jesus Christ. We observe, with regard to this promise,

1st. That it is always connected with Jesus as the procuring cause of it. The first form of the promise given in Paradise was, "the seed of the woman, which was to bruise the serpent's head;" which blessed hope was more fully developed to Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, in the various forms of promise, type, and symbol, until the Saviour came, and the eternal life was manifested to the world. The first part in the mighty purpose of love was then fulfilled; and now the second, and more glorious, waits to be accomplished in the second coming of Christ, which is the resurrection of the saints—the blessed hope of the believer,—the full manifestation and enjoyment of eternal life. The bright poles, around which this eternal life moves in all its circles and orbs, are the two comings of Christ—his coming in the flesh and his coming in glory: these are the two mighty centres of the divine working, whether it regards the church or the creation; and in these effulgent epochs of the divine administration we realize more clearly what is meant by eternal life. The fountain springs from the foot of the cross where the blessed Saviour died, but it rises over all

impediments, and through innumerable ages, higher and higher, ever seeking but never able to attain unto the level of its source; ever enlarging the heart, and ever longing for more enlargement; by every enjoyment increasing the capacity of enjoying; and, by every approach to the fellowship of God, only magnifying and multiplying the longings for more intimate communion still. But where shall this end? It shall end nowhere, it shall never end. It is eternal life; and in its very nature it includes the principle of perpetual growth.

2dly. As regards the nature of the enjoyments included in this eternal life, we would mention, very briefly, the following: They shall be *holy*; for all sin, as regards the saints, has been taken away by the cross of Christ, and nothing impure can enter into that holy place. They shall be *uninterrupted*; for every root of bitterness has been removed from the conscience, every internal and external cause of evil for ever removed. There shall be no more death, neither pain; and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. They shall be mainly *spiritual*; for though the risen body shall be there, glorified and immortal, yet communion with God and the Saviour must ever constitute the chief source of their heavenly beatitude. They shall be *full*; for though, as I conceive, the capacities of the redeemed shall be eternally enlarging, yet they shall always be in the state of perfect enjoyment. The enlargement will be owing to the fulness. They will not be all equally joyful, but they will be all equally *full* of joy. The vessels of His mercy, be they large or be they small, shall all be filled out of the ocean-fulness of Jehovah's love. But, lastly, the joys of *sense* shall be all present, purified indeed, and worthy of God, who created us with material bodies. The eye shall behold the beauty of the Lord, and be satisfied. There may be golden streets, too, in the holy city, and harps of gold for the celestial choirs.

“Solis gemmis pretiosis  
Hæc structura nectitur

Auro mundo tanquam vitro  
 Urbis via sternitur :  
 Abest limus, deest fimus,  
 Lues nulla cernitur.

Virent prata, vernant sata  
 Rivi mellis influunt,  
 Pigmentorum spirat odor,  
 Liquor et aromatum ;  
 Pendent poma floridorum  
 Non lapsura nemorum."

"Who can paint the golden glories  
 Of the new Jerusalem ?  
 Walls of jasper, gates of diamond,  
 Every tower a precious gem :  
 No more dying, no more sighing,  
 No more sorrow found in them.

Blooming fields and verdant meadows,  
 Oil and honey, milk and wine,  
 Sweetly-scented herbs, and odours  
 From the orange, palm, and pine ;  
 Fruits for ever ripe, and clusters  
 Pendent from the fruitful vine."

VII. The 26th verse mentions, in an obiter way, one of the most melancholy facts in the history of the world, viz. that there are *deceivers* : men who take a pleasure in deceiving the innocent, and rejoice in the inconsistencies of the children of God. This is a malignity worthy of Satan, from whom it comes. They are not content with the theory and practice of iniquity, as exemplified in their own persons, but must multiply their powers of evil-doing by enlisting others into the service of their master. This seduction, or deception, is applied to the *rebellious* (John vii. 12. Rev. xx. 8, 10) ; to those who *depart* and *lead others* from the truth of the Gospel (1 John ii. 26. 2 Tim. iii. 13. Jas. v. 19. 2 Pet. ii. 15 ; compare Tit. iii. 3.



Heb. v. 2); and, finally, it is applied to the *worshippers of idols* (Rev. ii. 20. xii. 9. xviii. 23. xix. 29. xx. 3). These seem to be the distinguishable forms of spiritual seduction: 1st. There are those who simply depart from the living God, but are quite unwilling to take up with the gods of the heathen: they are indifferent, and, like Gallio, care for none of these things; or, like Felix, will hear of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, at some other more convenient season, which, perhaps, never comes. Many worldly men are of this class; they are οἱ πλανώμενοι, “the seduced” (Tit. iii. 3); those who unthinkingly and foolishly are deceived by the blandishments of the world. 2dly. There are those who are not passive instruments, merely borne along by the current of worldliness and the fascinations of human glory; but the active agents of evil, who hate the truth because it is truth; and God because He is holy and hath eyes like a flame of fire; and Jesus Christ because his name, and work, and heavenly character all condemn them; and the Holy Spirit because they have quenched every spark which He kindled within them; and the children of God, whom they call fanatics and hypocrites, they hate with inextinguishable hatred, because, like the immortal pilgrim, they have abandoned the city of destruction, and set out for the New Jerusalem and the promised land. These have their best and clearest type in the Jews of old. They burned with mad and murderous rage against the Lord and his anointed, because all their schemes of worldly greatness and ambition, all their proud distinctions and time-honoured privileges were prostrated in the cross of Christ. 3dly. The third class have a definite object in view, and they wish to lead us away from the worship of the true God to *idolatry*. “God is too great for human conceptions,” say they: “let us have subsidiary deities to fill up the interval as much as possible between the finite and the infinite.” This was the origin of the polytheism of the heathen, and it is the origin of the many mediators, the image-worship, the saint-worship, the man-worship, and the Mary-worship of the

papists. Another form of this subtle deception is the feeling of an all-pervading, all-working God, which they call the spirit of nature, the soul of the universe, who speedily becomes inextricably blended with the laws of the creation. This is pantheism; and, in one form or other, it pervades not a little of the philosophy and rationalism of Germany. Now wherever there is any of these tendencies—the yielding to the current of worldliness and human glory, or the active hatred of God and divine truth, or the efforts to lead men into polytheism, or creature-worship—we should remember the warning of the apostle, “These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.”

VIII. *The anointing* As, in the 20th verse the proper remedy against the seductions of antichrist is the *χρίσμα*, or unction from the Holy One, so here, in the 27th, the safeguard against deceivers in general is the same *anointing*, or *χρίσμα*. The *καὶ ὑμεῖς* here, like the *ὑμεῖς* in verse 24, is emphatic, and is to be rendered thus, “*And as for you*,” like the Latin, “*vos quod attinet*,” precisely like the Hebrew *וְאַתָּה בְּרִיתִי* (Is. lix. 21; see lxi. 8. 1 Chron. xxviii. 2). “*But as for me*, this is my covenant,” &c. It is a kind of anakoluthon, according to some grammarians. This perplexed construction occurs most frequently in the impassioned writings of Paul. It is not to be considered a defect, but a beauty, and is found in the best authors of antiquity, though not frequently. I notice the following examples of it in the New Testament, as given by Winer: Acts xx. 3. xix. 34. Mark ix. 20. Luke xi. 11. Acts xxiii. 30. John vi. 22. Gal. ii. 6. Rom. ii. 17. v. 17—20. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Eph. iv. 2. Col. iii. 16. Acts xv. 22. Col. ii. 2. Col. i. 21, 26. 2 John 2. Heb. viii. 10. Acts xxvii. 10. Luke xxi. 6. 2 Cor. xii. 17. Heb. vi. 16. Col. ii. 23. Rom. xii. 1, 2. Eph. v. 27. 1 Cor. vii. 13. Phil. ii. 22. I have said that this varied construction is often used intentionally, and as an ornament to the discourse, and it is found in the most classic writers

(Winer, § 64). The reference to the anointing of the Holy Spirit in our passage contains the following particulars :—

1st. *Ye have received it from Him*, even Jesus, the living Head, in whom it has pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell. He is our way to the Father and the Father's way to us; and so, as the God-man on earth, and the man-God in heaven, He is the one all-sufficient and eternal Mediator between God and man. The effusion of the Spirit could not take place till He was glorified (John vii. 39); and therefore his going in our name and nature to the Father was the condition of the Comforter's coming to us (John xvi. 7). Hold fast, then, the glorious *fact*, in itself worth a thousand speculations, that Jesus Christ, our kinsman-Redeemer, is enthroned in the glory of the heavens as our Head and Mediator, in whom all gifts of grace and love, of wisdom and of power, for ever dwell. This fact demonstrates at once the love of God and the glory of man, and harmonizes all the divine dispensations from the beginning of the world.

2dly. *This anointing abideth in you* as the children of God, and shall not leave you in the time of trial and perplexity. This abiding of the Spirit in the believer is the guarantee against false doctrine and apostacy, as well as against the delusions of antichrist. He, even the Comforter, abideth in you: be not afraid of the rage of the persecutor, nor the powers of the adversary. Greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world. Your joy is the inward joy which the world can neither give nor take away; and, guided and led by this heavenly unction ye shall, having triumphed over all obstacles, finally enter the mansions of glory. Live, walk, and act in the consciousness that the Spirit dwelleth in you, and it will be your surest defence against the snares and delusions of the world.

3dly. The blessed consequence of this unction is, "Ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." See, on this teaching,

1 John ii. 20. John x. 4, 5. xiv. 26. xvi. 13. From these, and other similar passages, we gather the following truths: (1) That the Holy Spirit is the Comforter to abide with us for ever, who is come in the place of Christ the Redeemer. He is to be to the whole church universal, what Jesus was to the twelve. (2) Sometimes, as in the apostolic age, the work and indwelling of the Holy Ghost are manifested in signs, wonders, gifts of tongues, and all kinds of miraculous operations; and sometimes He reveals himself more as the Enlightener and Comforter of the people of God, and without such outward demonstrations of power; but his entire work, in whatever form, is divine and supernatural. What he does, nature can never do. (3) Therefore all active, positive, divine operations on the minds or the bodies of men are his peculiar work; and, as a consequence of this, all miracle-working, in the New Testament at least, is accomplished by *his power*. Three persons are requisite to the working of miracles: the person who does it, who is present; the person in whose name it is done, who is absent; and the person by whose power, in all cases, it is done. Thus, Jesus wrought his miracles in the name of the Father, and by the power of the Holy Ghost; and, after his ascension, the apostles wrought their miracles in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and by the same power of the Holy Ghost; so that, in every case, the power that comes in contact with our nature to heal it, or to enlighten it, or to comfort it, is the power of the Holy Ghost. His place is in the church; the place of Jesus is at the right hand of the Father; and the place or position of God is on the throne of grace. (4) If you ask me is this unction of the Spirit important? I answer, most important. Without it ye remain for ever dead and buried in the grave of sinful, fallen nature, ye become the sport of passions which ye cannot resist, the prey of enemies which ye cannot conquer, and, finally, outcasts from the home and the family of God. The work of the Holy Spirit is oftener mentioned in the Apostles than the atonement of Christ, which is a sufficient proof of its importance.



4thly. The words καὶ ἀληθὲς ἐστὶ καὶ οὐκ ἔστι ψεῦδος, “*and is truth, and is no lie,*” go to assure the believers to whom he wrote that they might have perfect assurance and confidence in the work of the Holy Ghost. It was no mere enthusiastic excitement of the mind, but a positive work and indwelling of the Spirit of God. The Comforter had taken the place of Jesus, and there was no reason to question the verity of his ministrations. Ye know, or ye ought to know, the Spirit of God by the fruits which his presence produces, which always are righteousness, and peace, and heavenly joy. He leads you to the cross, and keeps the eye looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. His work and his way are easily known, so that ye are without excuse if ye follow the spirits of delusion and error. If an angel from heaven were to tell you that image-worship, man-worship, many mediators, Mariolatry, were inspirations of the Holy Ghost, instead of believing him, you should pronounce him anathema maranatha. His work “is truth, and is no lie,” and all the lying vanities of heathenism and popish superstition are from the world, and not from the Holy Spirit.

“Come, blessed Spirit, source of light,  
Whose power and grace are unconfined,  
Dispel the gloomy shades of night—  
The thicker darkness of the mind.

Thine inward teachings make me know,  
The mysteries of redeeming love,  
The emptiness of things below,  
And excellence of things above.”

IX. ἡ παρουσία, “the coming of Christ.” This word is often applied to the second coming of Christ (Matt. xxiv. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 23. 1 Thess. ii. 19. 2 Thess. ii. 8. 2 Pet. iii. 4. 1 John i. 28. Matt. xxiv. 27—39. 1 Thess. iii. 13. iv. 15. v. 23. 2 Thess. ii. 1. Jas. v. 7, 8. 2 Pet. i. 16. ii. 12). The apostle resumes, in the twenty-eighth verse, the subject of the *last time*, and con-

nects with it the coming of Christ as the natural and blessed hope for those who had resisted the temptations or endured the persecutions of antichrist. John and Paul, and all the Scripture, connect the presence and reign of antichrist with the absence of Christ, in whose temple he pretends to rule; and the overthrow of the man of sin, as well as the imprisonment of Satan, and the consequent blessedness and glory of the latter day, with the coming of Christ in his power and glory. I can find no passages, therefore, which distinctly teach that antichrist shall be converted or destroyed by the power of God, or that the latter-day glory shall break in over our world before the coming of the Lord. His presence destroys antichrist, and then diffuses the glory and blessedness of the latter day. A new and glorious earth, full of righteousness, and peace, and joy, without the presence of Christ, is more an atheistic than a Christian idea, and certainly finds no trace in the word of God. On the contrary, it is his presence, and not the place, which makes the believer's heaven; and consequently the redeemed around the throne in heaven end their hallelujahs with the hope that they shall come with Him to reign on the earth (Rev. v. 10). On this glorious coming of the Son of God as the King and Judge of mankind we will mention only a few particulars naturally flowing out of our text.

1st. There is one safeguard against disappointment—one way of having confidence before Him at his coming, and that is, *by abiding in Him*. The way to attain unto full confidence in the love of God is not by an effort of the mind, or a strong resolution of the will, but by a quiet and peaceful walk of faith and well-doing in the ordinances of the Gospel. Being rooted and grounded in his love, we will grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in whom all the members united together in love groweth up into a holy temple in the Lord. This abiding in Him includes much, and teaches us much of the nature of a holy life. The apostle does not here command his beloved disciples to labour in the vineyard of

the Lord, or to strive after the gifts of the Spirit; nor does he exhort them to imitate their beloved Master in his meek and lowly character, but to *abide in Him*. He is the refuge-city, and, while there, the avenger of blood cannot touch them. He is the true Vine, and while the branches remain in Him they are able to resist the storms. He is the Rock, and being built upon Him the rains and the floods cannot shake them. Union with the strong gives the weak consciousness of strength, and so the believing children of God, abiding in Him, are sharers of his strength. This conscious abiding of the soul in Jesus is the very source and fountain of all our peace, confidence, and joy, and without such a consciousness we are weak, inconsistent, and timorous. How sweetly do our days pass, and how light are all trials and labours, when the soul is conscious of his presence and we feel sure that our walk is in the light of his love! *Abiding in Him* is the secret well-spring of all our holiest, sweetest joys, and John mentions it alone as the source of our confidence in the day of his appearing.

2dly. We observe that the shame of being rejected from his presence when He comes must be terrible and heart-rending. Every thing unites to make that one of the most interesting hours in the course of time. The two kingdoms that so long have divided the race of Adam shall then be finally separated from one another, and from that solemn moment the wise and the foolish virgins must dwell apart, and the door of the marriage-chamber shall be shut. The saints shall then realize the dearest desires of their hearts in the presence and fellowship of Him, whom, unseen, they followed and loved. They shall now see Him, and be with Him in his glory, far above all the trials and temptations of this mortal life. His love shall fill all hearts with joy, and his own hand shall lead them to fountains of living waters in the presence of God. We shall then read the value of the cross in the crowns of righteousness and the mansions of glory which it procured for the children of God. We shall then see what a principle *grace* is—the grace of our Lord

Jesus Christ, which could raise the lost and the perishing to such heights of glory. But in the same proportion as the heart of the believer must expand in the presence and love of the all-glorious God, so must also the shame and terror of the impenitent and unbelieving be equally augmented. They shall not see the Lord, nor enter into the joys of the heavenly mansions. The New Jerusalem, with its golden glories, is not for them, nor is there any hope left them that an endless eternity shall better their condition. He that is unjust shall be unjust still, and he that is filthy shall be filthy still. I would not dwell on the agonies of the self-destroyed soul, nor the fiery indignation and fearful looking-for of judgment which must consume the ungodly. Rather would I say, in the accents of the beloved disciple, "Abide in Him, that when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming."

3dly. We observe that the coming of the Lord is held up before the church as the *object of their expectation and hope*. John could have said, as we often say, "Abide in Him, that you may have confidence in the hour of death, and be ready to enter into his presence with joy." The truth is, death is little spoken of in the New Testament as a terror, and never as a hope, however glorious the region may be that lies beyond it. It is rarely present to the mind, and, when it is so, it is always painful, for it is the last enemy that shall be destroyed. It is the triumph of corruption and the fulfilment of the curse. Nor is death any great terror to man: the brave do not fear to die, and the timorous submit to it as an unavoidable necessity. An army of warriors, ready at any moment to brave death for their king and country, would quake and tremble before the appearance of a single angel (Matt. xxviii. 4). In fact, the constant preaching up of death, instead of the resurrection from the dead and the coming of the Lord in his glory, is contrary to the apostolic practice, and derogatory to the character of the redeemed man: it is a misplacing of the object of hope and admiration, and a



mistaking of the curse for the blessing, that can nullify the curse. You are mistaking the last enemy for your best friend, and, instead of seeking comfort in the Captain of Salvation and the consolations of the Comforter, you seek it in the wages of sin (Rom. vi. 23), and in the citadel of the king of terrors. Far different is the hope of the coming of the Lord. There we have an object in which the heart can luxuriate in perfect extacy, because it is the coming of our Friend and Redeemer; it is the triumph of righteousness over iniquity, of light over darkness, of life over the powers of death and the grave, of Christ over the antichrist and oppressor of the world. It is therefore called the *blessed hope* (Tit. ii. 12); and the *hope of righteousness*, for which we wait through the Spirit (Gal. v. 5); and the one hope of *our calling*, being common and free to all the saints (Eph. iv. 4); and the *hope of salvation*, viz. the adoption or the resurrection of the body for which we are longing so earnestly (1 Thess. v. 8. Rom. viii. 24); and the hope of *the resurrection*, when the whole man, soul and body united and glorified, shall enter into the joy of the Lord (Acts xxiii. 6). This is not a melancholy parting like death, but a joyful meeting of those long separated, in the fulness of joy in the morning of the resurrection, when the worthies of the olden time, the apostles and martyrs, (now crying for vengeance, and waiting for the coming of the Lord (Rev. vi. 10,) and heroes of the faith, with the whole body of the faithful, shall meet together in the presence of their Father, in the full communion of the Holy Ghost, around the throne of Emmanuel, their glorious Redeemer, clothed with the white robes of righteousness, with palms in their hands, and shining in their resurrection glory as the companions and brethren of the heavenly King.

“A hope so great, and so divine,  
 May trials well endure,  
 And purge the soul from self and sin,  
 As Christ himself is pure.

This is the hope which the apostolic churches were plunging forward that they might get at it before the time, and which we, a cold-hearted, miserable, heartless generation of the church, wish to put off as long as possible. A half-mad lady said, the other day, to a morning visitor, a friend of mine, "My dear Sir, it would be a great favour if you would not come so often, and then not stay so long." It is even so with us: the world has maddened us with pride, sin has deadened our Christian sensibilities, and the glorious hope of the martyr-churches has faded from our memories. His delaying his coming has become *our hope*; so that the practical language of our hearts is, "The longer He delays his coming the better, and if He does come, we hope his visit will not be longer than one day, viz. twelve hours by the steeple clock." I say, this is the language of our lives, if not of our lips, for we are unwilling to have our schemes of ambition and benevolence broken in upon by the coming of the day of God. Others, indeed, get rid of the responsibility and the hope of the apostolic ages by inserting mentally, as they read the epistles, after every passage that speaks of the advent, *that is his coming at death*, or *that is his spiritual coming*; and in this way the conscience is pacified, and every principle of right interpretation cast to the winds. The German critics act more honestly: they follow the rigid principles of interpretation, and maintain that all the apostles teach the speedy coming of Christ; but they hold that, in doing so, they teach a delusion which the course of time has now taught us to correct. We hold by their principles of criticism, but we deny their conclusions.

4thly. There are two words in this passage applied to the Advent—"his appearance" and "his coming," or "presence." It is possible that He might be present, or come, and yet not appear, and our text assures that, in his coming, He shall shine forth in his glory and majesty. It will be a great public event, which will be communicated to mankind with the rapidity of lightning. The  $\alpha\pi' \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$  is no doubt rightly translated *before*

*Him*, and yet it is vain to look for a similar example in the New Testament. In this case the ordinary meaning of *ἀπὸ* must yield to the necessity of the sense. The apostle beautifully concludes the chapter (ver. 29) by connecting righteousness both with the head and the members as their distinguishing principle. He is the Righteous One, and if ye know this great fact, ye should know also that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him. Out of Him, as the second Adam, flows all regenerating life, and the just and natural proof that we share it is a righteous walk and conversation. This is closely connected with the abiding in Christ and the hope of his coming mentioned in the preceding verse. The *abiding in Christ*, which gives us confidence at his coming, is nothing else but the *doing righteousness*, which, again, is the result of our being born of Him. The righteous King is coming, and it is the righteous subjects alone that can share the glories of his reign. The new birth is a birth unto righteousness; and, being born of the incorruptible seed of the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever, ye shall have confidence and joy in the presence of your rightful prince and Lord.

“Come, then, and, added to thy many crowns,  
 Receive yet one, the crown of all the earth,  
 Thou, who alone art worthy! It was thine  
 By ancient covenant ere nature’s birth;  
 And thou hast made it thine by purchase since,  
 And overpaid its value with thy blood.  
 Thy saints proclaim thee King; and in their hearts  
 Thy title is engraven with a pen  
 Dipped in the fountain of eternal love.  
 Thy saints proclaim thee King; and thy delay  
 Gives courage to their foes, who, could they see  
 The dawn of thy last advent, long desired,  
 Would creep into the bowels of the hills  
 And flee for refuge to the falling rocks.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

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Ἴδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατήρ, ἵνα τέκνα Θεοῦ κληθῶμεν. Διὰ τοῦτο ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει ἡμᾶς, ὅτι οὐκ ἔγνω αὐτόν.

Ἀγαπητοὶ, νῦν τέκνα Θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ οὐπω ἐφανερώθη τί ἐσόμεθα· οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὁψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθὼς ἐστι.

Καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ' αὐτῷ, ἀγνίζει ἑαυτὸν, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἀγνός ἐστι.

Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.

Καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη, ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν ἄρῃ· καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐστι.

Πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων, οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων, οὐχ ὥρακεν αὐτόν, οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.

Τεκνία, μηδεὶς πλανάτω ὑμᾶς· ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην, δίκαιός ἐστι, καθὼς ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.



Ο ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν, ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν· ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει. Εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερώθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα λύσῃ τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει· καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται.

Ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστι τὰ τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου· πᾶς ὁ μὴ ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

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MEANING OF ὅτι; 3. "THE DEVIL," ὁ διάβολος; 4. THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST; 5. "BORN OF GOD" EXPLAINED; 6. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND BROTHERLY LOVE.

WE have seen, in the second chapter, the two kingdoms brought together, and their distinctive principles and practices enunciated. He that hateth and he that loveth are compared and contrasted. The followers of the world and the followers of God are clearly and eternally distinguished. Antichrist is brought forth as the false Christ, claiming the dignity and authority of the Son of God. The spirit that pervades the second chapter is that of pure and holy love, which seeks to separate from the evil out of love to the evil-doer. He begins it with Jesus, the Advocate with the Father, and ends it with Jesus, the Righteous One, from whom, as the second Adam, the new and regenerated life must flow, so that the Alpha and the Omega of the chapter is *Jesus*, the Son of God. In Him alone the apostle sees all the fullness of mercy and eternal life for our ruined race; in Him the only power that can conquer the principles of the world and the flesh, and finally lift up the redeemed and believing church to the glory of the skies. He is one with the Father in such a way that the Father can never be honoured, loved, and adored if He is despised and rejected. He is the propitiation for our sins on the cross of Calvary, and our Advocate and Mediator with the Father in heaven. In Him the new commandment of love hath been verified, and the unction of the Holy Ghost is shed down upon the believer through his mediation. These are some of the glorious truths which we have discussed in the last chapter, and now we come to the third, which is peculiarly rich, and full of the spirit of the beloved disciple. May God enable us to understand it fully and expound it faithfully! The substance of the first verse may be summed up in the words

#### I. OUR HEAVENLY FATHER'S LOVE.

Full of this theme, the apostle breaks forth into an exclaima-

tion of admiration when he contemplates the immeasurable dimensions of the love of God; ἴδετε, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" So John the Baptist, as if incapable of all description, cries out to the multitude, "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh the sin of the world!" So the prophet Isaiah also exclaims, when contemplating the fullness and freeness of Jehovah's grace and goodness, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." But let us survey this subject more nearly, that we may imbibe more and more of the spirit of love.

1st. The first general impression which the mind receives from the verse is, the importance which the apostle attaches to the *sonship*, *υἰοθεσία*, as this is made the proof of the Father's love. Herein is the majesty of his love seen (τέκνα Θεοῦ κληθῶμεν), that we should be called the sons of God. The Vulgate, and many other versions, have added the words καὶ ἐσμὲν, *and we are*, making the meaning to stand thus, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God, and we are really sons of God." Jerome translates it "Ut filii Dei nominemur et simus;" and Kistemaker has "Dass wir kinder Gottes heissen, und es sind." But the additional words are evidently a gloss intended to explain the meaning of κληθῶμεν, and they add nothing to the meaning of the text; for *to be called* is a Hebraism for *to be*, but of this the ancient commentators were probably ignorant. See this usage of בָּקָרָה, Is. i. 26. ix. 5. xxx. 7. xxxv. 8. xlvii. 1, 5. xlviii. 8. lvi. 7; and for the New Testament, consult Luke i. 22, 35, 36, 76. ii. 23. xv. 19. 1 Cor. xv. 19. Heb. iii. 13. Matt. xxi. 13. Mark xi. 17. The assertion of the text, therefore, is, not that they are merely nominally the sons of God, but that they really are so. Why our translators should have rendered τέκνα, *children*, by the word *sons*, I know not, except that, perhaps, they thought the definite more emphatic

than the general expression. As to the nature of this *sonship*, I would make the following observations: (1) It is the act of the Father adopting into his family those whom He pleases, and it arises entirely from his pure and sovereign love. We had no claim upon Him for any thing, for in the act of rebellion we had forfeited all. His justice might have demanded the punishment of our apostacy, but mercy rejoices over judgment, and He meets us with a message of grace. The choosing of them in Christ before the foundation of the world (Eph. i. 4), his redeeming them through the incarnate Son, his quickening them by the Spirit, and finally glorifying them in heaven, are all owing to his sovereign unmerited grace. This is the eternal fountain from which all our blessings flow, and they are, and can be, blessings to us only because they are of *grace*.

“Grace, ’tis a charming sound,  
Harmonious to the ear;  
Heaven with the echo shall resound,  
And all the earth shall hear.

Grace taught my wandering feet  
To tread the heavenly road,  
And new supplies each hour I meet,  
While passing on to God.”

Thus the Father’s love is represented in Scripture as being the original source of salvation; and this love was not purchased for us, but manifested to us in the doing and dying of Christ. The work of the Son of God was, not to make the Father love us, but to break down the barriers that kept his love from reaching us. In the cross of the Redeemer the violated law of the creation is vindicated—awfully and gloriously vindicated; so that the divine Lawgiver can become a sin-forgiver, without danger of being reckoned a sin-indulger. But the coming of the Son, the fulfilling of the law, the atonement of Calvary, the person of the Redeemer (John iii. 16), and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, are all but the various manifestations



of his love; are all but the streams that flow from the eternal fountain of the Father's love. (2) But we observe, secondly, that this *υιοθεσία*, "sonship," is threefold; answering to the threefold sonship of Christ, in whom alone the adoption of the Father takes effect and is realized. Jesus Christ is the eternal Son, begotten, without a beginning, before all worlds; and this is the basis of our being predestinated to the adoption of sons in the beloved (Eph. i. 4—7. Rom. viii. 29). Then, again, Jesus is the Son of God, born into our world, spiritually begotten (Luke i. 35) by the power of the Holy Ghost, and thus He is the centre and fountain-head from which all spiritual regeneration flows. Lastly, He is the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead (Rev. i. 5. Col. i. 18. Ps. ii. 7; compare Acts. xiii. 33), and, as such, He is the type and forerunner of those "who are the children of God, being children of the (first) resurrection" (Luke xx. 34—36). Thus there is an adoption by predestination, an adoption by incarnation, and an adoption by resurrection, and Jesus, the Son, is the form, fountain-head, and fulness from which they all proceed. We are chosen from eternity to be sons in Him who is the eternal Son; we are regenerated by the Holy Ghost; and the basis and example of this work of sanctification is Jesus, the Son of God, born into our nature by the same Holy Ghost; and the resurrection of the saints (1 Cor. xv. 23), or the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 5), or the resurrection of the just (Luke xiv. 14), which we are striving, like Paul, to attain unto (Phil. iii. 11), and which is limited to the children of God (*υιοί*, "sons of God," Luke xx. 36), has its type and example in Jesus, the first-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. All sonship centres in Jesus, the first-born, and heir of all things, in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell. (3) But, thirdly it is natural, if we wish to see the Father's love in the sonship, that we should contemplate for a moment the dignity and the privileges of the children. These children, then, are the royal priesthood of God, the kings and priests of creation,

whom He is preparing and training for their mighty office in the kingdom of glory. Look at the *price* which was paid for their redemption, even the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish, and think what their worth must be in the sight of God; consider the *means* of *grace* in the office and work of the Holy Ghost, by which they are made meet for heavenly inheritance; and then imagine, if you can, what their dignity and glory must be when the time of their exaltation comes. The Apostle Paul argues, that if they are sons, then are they heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ (Gal. iv. 7). They are the chosen ones, the redeemed ones, predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God (Rom. viii. 30), whom no man can injure, whom none can accuse, and whom no man can pluck from the Father's hand. They are members of His family; they are sharers of His fullness; they are the vessels of His mercy, overflowing with His love; they are the epistles of His manifold wisdom, known and read of all men. Think of the many-mansioned house where they shall dwell; of the crowns of glory which they shall wear; of the fellowship with God which they shall enjoy for ever; of the bliss, beatitude, and glory which are their inheritance; of the white robes of righteousness which they wear; of the palms of victory which they hold in their hands; of the divine image to which they are conformed in every faculty of the mind and every fibre of the body; and surely you will cry out with the apostle, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!"

"O, love divine! thou vast abyss!  
 My sins are swallowed up in thee;  
 Covered is my unrighteousness;  
 From condemnation I am free.  
 While Jesus' blood, through earth and skies,  
 'Mercy! free, boundless mercy,' cries."

2dly. Yet the immediate consequences of this adoption seem

to be most disastrous, instead of advantageous, to the children of God; for it is written in our text, "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not;" from which simple statement we gather the following important facts: (1) That the world, by the necessity of its being, can never recognise or estimate at its right value the Christian character. Our life is, or ought to be, the hidden life of a holy walk of communion with God, and it is impossible for those who are without the pale of the family to know much about it. A great change hath come over us, and all the principles of our action; all the habits, feelings, and deepest sympathies of our nature have been revolutionized: we see with other eyes, we hear with other ears, we act from other motives, we are drawn on by other hopes, and we are impelled by other fears. We have left the world because we are persuaded that it is destined to perish and be forgotten, while we believe that "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Its deceiving brightness can allure us no longer, for we have seen the King in his beauty, and the land that is afar off. Its pleasures we have found to be deceptive, its promises a deceitful dream, and its wages only sorrow and death. How, then, can the κόσμος, "world," rightly estimate conduct which arises from motives and principles so different from its own? I agree, further, with Grotius, that as γινώσκω, גִּנָּה, according to a known Hebrew usage, signify to *approve of*, to *care for*, and to *love* (Ps. cxliv. 3. Amos iii. 3. Nah. i. 7. Ps. xxxvi. 11. Hos. viii. 2; compare 2 Tim. ii. 19. John x. 14, 15, 27); so *not to know* involves the principles of *hatred* and *persecution*. In the days of John the world and the church stood more clearly separated and defined than in the present age, when the mingling of the two has made the world somewhat better and the church much worse. Now the savour of Christian sentiment pervades the whole community, elevating the public morality of the nations, and purifying, in some degree at least, the fountains of vileness which, in the days of the apostle, flowed openly and everywhere among the heathen

multitudes. Hence the fierce and murderous persecutions to which the first Christians were subjected because of their faithful testimony to the truth. The world did not know them; and, as they could not cease bearing witness for the Lord, the hatred of the idolatrous masses became inflamed, and the streets, theatres, and market-places, ran blood, and the blood of the martyrs became the seed of the church. (2) But, secondly, we are taught the blessed truth, that the saint and the Saviour are on the same side in this conflict; and if the world does not know and love us, it is because it hated and crucified Him. It is enough that the servant be as his Lord, and we cannot expect to pass along the narrow way without some prickles, when He wore a crown of thorns. The malignity, indeed, may not appear so fierce and murderous against us as against Him; but that arises solely from our want of conformity to his divine image. The testimony is one from the beginning, and must continue the same to the end, when the two kingdoms shall be finally separated, and the victory given to the saints at the coming of the Son of Man in his glory. We come now to the second verse, which contains, with other subsidiary truths,

## II. THE COMING OF CHRIST, AND OUR LIKENESS TO HIM.

The apostle proceeds with his glorious theme, and opens up to the believing children of God the hopes that should animate them in fighting the battles of the faith. We shall illustrate, in their order, the various particulars of the verse.

1st. The word *ἀγαπητοὶ* is full of richest meaning, and quite in character with the style of the apostle. They are *beloved* in the fullest and most perfect sense of the word. They are beloved of God (Rom. i. 7), who has chosen them in his beloved Son from the foundation of the world, and, in these last days, sent the Saviour to redeem them. They are beloved of Christ, who has assumed their nature, washed away their sins in the blood of the cross, and now intercedes for them in the holiest of all; they are beloved of the Holy Ghost, the



Comforter, by whom they have been converted, quickened, and drawn to the Redeemer; and, finally, they are beloved of one another, for the whole body of Jesus is animated by the one spirit, and they feel themselves to be members one of another. They are brethren, children of the same Father, pilgrims towards the same home, fed by the same manna, surrounded by the same enemies, and animated by the same immortal hopes.

2dly. They are *now* the τέκνα Θεοῦ, “children of God,” and, whatever may be before them, they cannot but rejoice in their sonship. Liberty is a glorious and an ennobling feeling; and if there were no future of life and immortality before us, we would rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. The shackles of sin that bound us are broken by the infusion of a celestial power, and we feel with exultation the glorious liberty of the children of God. We breathe a freer, purer air, we tread this lower world with a nobler gait, and we breast the storms and billows of life with a manlier resolution; for we know that, even now, we are the children of God. This is the source of our strength and our victory, even the assurance that we are the children of God, and this joy the great world can neither give nor take away. Ye think we are beside ourselves, but it is the love of Christ that constraineth us. Ye may treat us as ye please—with mockery, persecution, and death itself, but the conviction that we are the children of God will sustain us under it all. We belong to the *immortal band*. The former things have passed away, and all things have become new. We are members of the glorious family of God, which shall flourish in perpetual vigour when the nations, races, and empires of this world shall all have passed into oblivion. We are stones in the living temple, founded on the Rock of Ages, which shall survive the most durable monuments of mankind, and, instead of decaying, shall grow higher and stronger as age after age passes over it for ever. We are heirs of the kingdom of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the

Holy Ghost, which, like God, its Author and King, shall remain for ever. We are now the children of God. Grace has found us out, and conquered all our opposition to the name and work of Jesus Christ. We, as dear children, have access at all times to our Father in heaven, whose hand is ever ready to help, and his ear is ever open to our cry. Ours is the children's bread, the manna from heaven, and the water from the rock in the desert land. The confidence of love, the communion of the Spirit of God, the fellowship of the body and blood of the Saviour, the anticipations of hope, are all our blessed portion as the children of God. All this belongs to us now in virtue of our being the *children of God*. This is no mere name, but a great and glorious reality wrought in us by the power of the Holy Ghost, and is delineated in innumerable passages in the holy Scriptures. This is the *regeneration* and the new birth, of which so much is said in the Bible; this is the principle of *conversion*, without which none can see the kingdom of God; this is the new heart, and the new name, and the new nature, of which we read so often in Scripture, without which it is impossible to see or enjoy the presence of the holy God. Such, says John, is our present condition. We are now the children of God, and surely every reader and hearer of this word should put the solemn question to his own heart, "Is it indeed so with me: am I indeed a child of God and an heir of the heavenly kingdom?"

3dly. As to the *future*, the apostle makes the following statement in our passage: "We know not what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." This glorious announcement should fill all believing Christian hearts with ineffable satisfaction and joy.

(1) *We know not what we shall be.* The glory is indescribable, the beatitude of our future condition is inconceivable: all types, foretastes, and premonitions are weak and incompetent, nor can the largest heart which the love of God hath

enlarged conceive the blessedness and joy of the believer's future. We know we shall be happy, blessed, and glorious for ever; but *how* happy, how blessed, and how glorious, we do not know. There is nothing here, in this sin-stained world, that can give us any conception of it; no beauty, no holiness, no love, power, and majesty, to be compared to it. We know not what we shall be; (2) but this we know, "that we shall be like Him." Like whom? The connection of the passage seems to shew that it is God, and so Dr. Lücke understands it: nor is there any difficulty in this interpretation, for you must understand it in the end of Θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ, "God in Christ." But the passage should not be taken so critically; and the Father and the Son were so united in the mind of the apostle, that he could pass from the one to the other without any marked division in the discourse. I believe, therefore, that the οὗτος, "He," in the second verse, refers to Christ, for the following reasons: He alone can be properly said to *appear*, and He alone can be referred to in the 5th verse as appearing to take away our sins. Jesus is, in the Epistles, generally the object of the believer's hope: it is his coming and appearance we are waiting and longing for (Tit. ii. 13. 1 Cor. i. 7. Phil. iii. 30. Col. iii. 4). It is more agreeable to the nature of things, and the truth of the Scriptures, that we should be *like Christ*, than that we should be like the Father, inasmuch as the Son of God has become partaker of the human nature. Lastly, if you refer the appearing to God, and not to Christ, you remove no textual or critical difficulty, as you must change the *person* somewhere in the passage, seeing verse 5 must necessarily be understood of the Son, and not of the Father. But leaving such critical minutiae, let us contemplate the glorious assertion of our text, "*We know that we shall be like Him.*" We do not know fully what we shall be; but this we know, that we shall be like our Redeemer. He became like us in misery and wretchedness, and we shall be like Him in the effulgence of his glory. He bore our cross, that we might wear the crown of righteousness

and of glory. This is enough for us to know, and should satisfy the most ardent, loving heart. On this subject read the following Scriptures: Rom. viii. 29. 1 Cor. xv. 49. Phil. iii. 21. Col. iii. 4. 2 Pet. i. 4. These passages teach us that, in the future world, we shall be like Christ in body and in mind, in the volitions of the will and the desires of the heart. We shall be clothed with the royal robe of his righteousness, and admitted into the presence-chamber of the great King; where, in the communion of the Spirit of Love, we shall share the beatific vision of the divine glory. This is the highest, brightest hope of the saints of God—"they shall be like Him." All descriptions of paradise and heaven yield to the majestic beauty and force of these three words, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, *We shall be like Him*. Surely this hope should nerve us for the battle of life, and dim all the beauty of the world's most dazzling splendour, by fixing the eyes of our hearts upon the glorious person of the Redeemer, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge, and into whose image and likeness it is the purpose of our heavenly Father to elevate and glorify us.

"Our souls, we know, when He appears,  
Shall bear his image bright,  
For all his glory, full disclosed,  
Shall open to our sight."

But (2) the *time* of this glory is connected with the appearing of Christ, and every thing of an intermediate nature passed over in silence. The apostle does not deny or think lightly of the blessedness of the dead who die in the Lord, but he directs the mind of the believer, as all the apostles do, to the coming of the Lord as their glorious, all-absorbing hope. On this theme it were easy to quote a multitude of Scriptures, but we shall let a few clear passages suffice: Col. iii. 4. Phil. iii. 21. 1 Thess. i. 10. ii. 19. iii. 13. iv. 13—18. v. 23. 2 Thess. i. 7—10. ii. 1. iii. 5. Tit. ii. 13. These passages of Scripture connect the coming of



our Lord with the glory and blessedness of the believing church, nor is there any hint in Scripture that the intermediate state between death and the resurrection is the hope of the church, however happy and blessed the soul may be with the Lord. So our text assures us, that when He shall *appear* we shall be like Him, and (3) the reason is given, that we shall *see Him as He is*. We become like those whom we love; fellowship, love, and affection open up a thousand channels of communication between the souls of men, and thus their wills, their hearts, their sentiments, become assimilated to one another. We shall behold the all-glorious One, and, in beholding, we shall become glorious; dwelling in the high and holy place, where He who is the beauty of holiness reigns, we shall catch the radiance of the heavenly King. *We shall see Him*. Oh most sweet and blessed hope! Now our faith gropes darkly after Him, and very often cannot find Him, whom our souls seek to love; but then we shall see Him face to face in the glory of his kingdom, without a cloud to darken the eternal sunshine of our souls, without an impediment to mar the communion of our souls with God. In this divine process of loving and adoring, we shall become like Him whom we love and adore. If, by standing round the cross, and contemplating the meek and patient Lamb of God, we become assimilated to the likeness of his lowliness and humility, how much more shall the vision of his heavenly kingdom change us into the likeness of his glory! This hope of the believing heart is of a moral kind, and will be felt to be glorious, or otherwise, in proportion as we *love* Him more or less. If the soul be full and overflowing with his love, then his appearance will be dear to us, and the hope of our being like Him will be inexpressibly glorious. This hope of being like Him is not like the expectation of some earthly possession, which, in its rude materialism, remains always the same, but, ever enlarging and expanding, it becomes multiplied and magnified in proportion to the greatness

and intensity of our love. This moral likeness to the Lord Jesus shall be expanding and enlarging in the kingdom of our Father for ever. The faculties of the soul, whose germs and buds only we know any thing about here, shall, in the new and eternal life of the resurrection, expand into their full perfection and vigour; and, throughout the boundless ages of eternity, they shall expand and fructify more and more, as the infinitely glorious object of their contemplation reveals more and more of the heights and depths of his glory. It is no wonder, therefore, that the apostle, in the third verse, calls it,

### III. A PURIFYING HOPE.

For it is written, "Every man that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." That the hope of the second coming of Christ, and of our likeness to Him, is of a holy sanctifying nature, requires no proof. All that our heavenly Father reveals to our faith and hope must have the direct tendency to make us wiser and better, holier and happier, than before. Among the subjects which it has pleased Him who knows what is in man to bring most prominently before the eye of hope, the second advent occupies the most conspicuous place. The apostles, who saw Him ascend from Mount Olivet to heaven, received from the attendant angels the promise, "This Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner" (Acts i. 10); and nearly the last words of the Apocalypse are the solemn prayer, "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. xxii. 20). I shall just mention the following *facts* with regard to the advent as the hope of the church, after which the purifying nature of that blessed hope will be more manifest.

1st. The *importance* of this Scripture doctrine is seen in the fact, that it is repeatedly, and in every possible variety of form, brought before us in the word of God. I have examined the New Testament carefully on the subject, and I assert that the

*second advent* is much oftener brought before the church than the *atonement of Christ* on the cross. If any one doubts this assertion, let him make the experiment, and he will soon be undeceived. Now, in virtue of this fact, I assert that the hopes connected with the advent must be of a transforming, purifying nature, otherwise the Lord would not urge it so continually upon our acceptance.

2dly. The glory and blessedness of the believer are connected with the coming of the Saviour, as we have already seen, and therefore the hope of it must be purifying. We make preparation for the coming of a king, and surely the daily expectation of the speedy coming of Christ is well calculated to dash the delusions of the world from our lips, and make us look out for the oil, and the lamp, and the wedding garment. "Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh. What I say unto you I say unto all, Watch!"

3dly. The advent, and the blessed hopes connected with it, are made the *motives* for most of the Christian duties in the New Testament; so that, without them, we can never attain to the purity and strictness of Gospel morality. Let us mention some of these. It is our duty to hear the word of God, and the advent is the motive (Matt. xiii. 43). Watchfulness is a Christian duty, and the constant motive is the advent (Matt. xxiv. 42. xxv. 12, 13. Mark xiii. 33. Luke xxi. 36). Are surfeiting, drunkenness, and the cares of this life, evils that beset us, and against which we are to contend? The proper motive to enable us to do so is the coming of the Saviour to put an end to the works of the flesh (Luke xxi. 34—36). Is it our duty to use diligently the good gifts of God? Then, waiting for the coming of Christ made the Corinthians do so (1 Cor. i. 7). One of the longest and noblest descriptions of the advent in the Bible is in 1 Cor. xi., and the conclusion from the whole, in the 58th verse, is "*Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; foras-*

much as ye know that your labour shall not be in vain in the Lord." Moderation is a duty, and the motive is, "the Lord is at hand" (Phil. iv 4); heavenly-mindedness and mortification are duties much insisted upon in Scripture, and the coming of Christ is the motive to both (Col. iii. 1—5); waiting for Christ, as a duty, is put on the same level with turning from idols to worship the living and true God (1 Thess. i. 9, 10). Do we need comfort when weeping over the death of martyred brethren? We do; and, after the noble description of the advent (1 Thess. iv. 13—17), the apostle concludes with, "Wherefore comfort one another with these words." These are some examples of the way in which the advent is used for the edification of the Christian church. From all this, then, it is manifest that every man that hath this hope in Him (*ἐπ' αὐτῷ*, "in Christ"), purifieth himself, even as He is pure. It is vain to say you are waiting for the coming of Christ, in the hope of seeing Him as He is, and being like Him, if you are not striving after the purity of Gospel holiness. You are under a fatal delusion; and the day of God shall dash all your hopes to pieces, and present you as you are before the presence of your God.

#### IV. THE NATURE OF SIN.

The apostle comes now (verse 4) to consider the nature and evils of sin. The radical idea of *ἀμαρτία*, is the *missing of a mark*, which is also the original meaning of the Hebrew *חַטָּא*, and hence it naturally and easily came to be applied to our errors and shortcomings in respect to the law of God. The divine law is the mark set before us, and sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of it; which definition is built upon the principle asserted by the apostle Paul, that where there is no law there can be no transgression. The apostle asserts that "whosoever committeth sin (*πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν*) transgresseth also the law (*καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ* 'does



an act of lawlessness'), for sin is the transgression of the law." The sinner is here contemplated as a person who acts spontaneously, and carries out his own will, as if there was no law; and this, carried to its full extent, delineates the antichrist of the Christian church, "the lawless one" ὁ ἄνομος (2 Thess. ii. 8), who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. The essence of sin is *wilfulness*, or a desire to do our own pleasure in opposition to the will of God; and, springing from the inward fountain of the mind, it may exist in foul and fatal malignity before any outward act of transgression is committed.

1st. The first thing, therefore, that we would say of this ἁμαρτία is, that it *extends* to the life and the fountains from which our life flows to the actions and the motives from which they spring. The law of God is not satisfied with the exactions of an external fulfilment, but requires the purity of the heart. The renewed soul is a temple in which nothing that is unholy or impure should dwell. In this respect the morality of the Gospel differs altogether from the morality of the heathens and the Moslems, who know nothing of the Scripture principles of heavenly-mindedness. God is a real, holy, personal God, and never can be satisfied with the mere shows and appearances of excellence.

2dly. There seems to be a reference in the words ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν to the *habit of sinning*, and not to any mere act of occasional and unintentional transgression (See Matt. iii. 8, 10, and Jas. iii. 12, on this signification of ποιέιν), even as the *doing righteousness*, ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην (verse 10) refers to the *habit of living righteously*. There is always the danger that the act may lead to the habit, and that the habit will become stronger and stronger, until the whole powers of the soul are prostrated and depraved. This is a fearful state of the soul when an evil habit has gained the mastery over us, and we not only yield to the seduction, but make a trade of iniquity, and find our pleasure in the ways and the wages of unrighteousness. In so

doing, we are forging our own chains, though we think it not, and heaping up mountains of misery upon our own heads. In proportion as the sleep has been long and deep, will the awakening be terrible when the day of vengeance comes and all the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light. Avoid, therefore, the first appearance of evil, and strangle the serpent sin before it gains strength and stature; for be assured that every repetition will only strengthen the fetters that entangle you, until ye become the slaves of a seductive and dominant habit.

#### V. JESUS THE REMOVER OF SIN.

But though sin may have triumphed over you a thousand times, you are not on that account to give up the struggle; "for ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin" (verse 5). Here we have a clear statement of the *purpose* for which the Saviour was manifested in the flesh, that is, *ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν*, "to take away our sins" (See John i. 29. Is. liii. 11). So the Hebrews use **נָשָׂא חַטָּאת** (1 Sam. xv. 25). The idea is, that sin rises up as a barrier between us and God, and Jesus has been manifested to take it away. He has broken down the middle wall of partition between us and God, so that whosoever will may take of the waters of life freely. There is now no barrier between you and your heavenly Father any more: it is removed by the dying love of Christ. The meaning is substantially the same as *ἀναφέρειν*, to bear the burden or punishment of sin (1 Pet. ii. 24). The guilt of sin lay like a heavy burden upon us, and Jesus, by satisfying the divine justice, and vindicating the law of God, has borne it in our stead. He his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree. This also is the idea of the remarkable expression (Is. liii. 6), "The Lord hath caused to meet in Him (**הַכִּפִּיֵּי בּוֹ**) the iniquity of us all." He is the victim on whom all the punishment due to us fell, and all our sins are gathered together and expiated in his cross. This is the great act of

expiation, says the apostle, for which He was manifested, and in this we see the fulness and depth of his love. His person is the central point where all interests, sympathies, and holy associations meet, and the moment in his earthly history when they attain their highest development and lustre is the *cross*. To this the soul feels itself wondrously attracted as the one event in the history of the world from which pardon and peace may be obtained. Here the burden falls from the pilgrim's back, and new life flows into penitent and broken hearts. Here, too, is the source of all gospel obedience and morality, for I hold all service legal and of little value in the sight of God which does not flow from love to Christ.

“Talk they of morals? O, thou bleeding Lamb,  
The grand morality is love to thee!”

Nor is it natural, reasonable, or scriptural, to believe that God will accept and honour our services when we neglect or dishonour his Son (1 John ii. 23). The point, therefore, to which our eyes should be directed is the cross, in which the apostle assures us our sins were taken away. For this, He, who is the Son, and the Lamb of God, and the eternal Life, was manifested in our nature, so that the expiation of sin is one of the most important ends of his redeeming love. Without this, nothing else avails. It is vain to spread out before me the glories of heaven, or to sound in my ears the hallelujahs of the heavenly hosts, while my soul is filled and overpowered with dark suspicions of the character of God, and melancholy forebodings of the wrath to come. The cross brings me relief, and stills all my fears, by revealing to my soul the character of God in Christ as a loving and sin-forgiving Father. As we stand looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, enduring the cross and despising the shame, the question naturally arises, “What is the meaning of this wondrous scene?” And the answer is, “All this unutterable love of God, which was in his heart from eternity, and now has broken forth *here*, was love to thee.

He thought of *thee* before the world was, and the proof of his love is the dying Lamb." Oh, and is this really for me? Is it in very deed and truth a *fact* that the Son of God dies for *me*? Oh, if this be true, I have indeed a Father in heaven, and I have hitherto been living in the midst of this burning, dying love of God, and all the while I knew it not. But now the old truth that there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared (Ps. cxxx), has reached me at last, in thine own time and way, oh my God and Redeemer! The apostle adds, "And in Him is no sin." So far as I know, this truth is recognised by all Christendom. Even the bitterest enemies of the name and religion of Christ could find no *fault in Him*. He is the Just One, and the Holy One of God, and the Lamb without spot or blemish. On this subject I mention the following important points.

1st. I hold, contrary to the heretics of the first ages and the surmises of Dr. A. Clark (on Matt. i. 20 and Luke i. 35), that the human nature of Jesus Christ was not a celestial or super-celestial body, or a new creation out of nothing, but a real *human body*, "begotten by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and born of her, yet without sin." He was, and must be, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, and of the race and lineage of David, or He is not the true Messiah; and besides, if He were not a real man of a true body and reasonable soul subsisting, He could be no example for us. He would neither be our brother nor our kinsman-Redeemer, and his wondrous life of sympathy and sorrow would be deprived of all its worth and beauty. He was, then, a real man, of the same flesh and blood as the children and the brethren; as it is written, "Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also himself likewise took part of the same" (Heb. ii. 14). But,

2dly. We hold that this holiness or sinlessness of the Lord Jesus was owing to his generation of the Holy Ghost, by which mighty operation of God He escaped the taint of original sin,



or the natural depravity of the human race; and hence it is written, "Therefore, also, that *holy thing* that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke i. 35). From that moment onward till this hour, and for evermore, He was filled with the Holy Spirit of God, so that in thought, word, and deed, in his life and in his death, He was the Holy One, pure and holy as God himself. In Him is no sin, and therefore He could "bear our sins in his own body on the tree, by whose stripes we are healed." These are the two points which it is necessary to hold fast against all gainsayers, viz. that He was really and truly the Son of Man, and yet that He was holy, as God is holy.

#### VI. ABIDING IN CHRIST, SINLESS PERFECTION.

The sixth verse is the stronghold of the Methodists and Sinless-perfectionists. The apostle says, without doubt, "Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not;" and if we were to take the words as a solitary and isolated proposition, their natural interpretation would lead us to the belief that every believer was impeccable; for the passage says nothing of the *possibility* of sinless perfection, but it asserts the fact, that "whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not." This, however, proves too much, and therefore proves nothing; for except the Perfectionists assert, that from the moment of their believing on the name of Christ they have never sinned, the passage is of no use to them. We are not, however, to interpret this or any other passage in such an arbitrary manner, without reference either to the analogy of the faith or the experience of the children of God; and hence the good Dr. Clark (on 1 John iii. 3 and elsewhere) has made many unnecessary complaints and accusations. As well might I hold, from 1 John i. 8, that Methodists and Perfectionists are deceivers, and the truth is not in them, which I am far from doing, because I interpret the word of God on better principles. The question is, not "Can we live without sin in this life?" as if we wished to remain in sin, or as if we could not

live better and happier without it than with it; but the question is, "How can we get entirely rid of it?" Are their views of the holiness and perfections of Jehovah the *deepest* who tell us they are pure, as the Son of God is pure? Is there no danger that, instead of rising up to the perfection and likeness of God, they are bringing both God and his holy law down to their own level? Again, the question is, not whether perfect absolute holiness be possible, for it requires but little faith to enable us to believe that God can make of us, and do with us, what He pleases; but the question is, "Is there any one on the earth as holy and perfect as the Lord Jesus Christ?" You hear them saying this is a relative and not an absolute perfection; it is the perfection of man, not of angels; and in so saying they are doing far more violence to the text than we do. We qualify the phrase "sinneth not" by adding wilfully or knowingly, while they hold to their sinlessness, and qualify the perfection of God and of the angels to meet their own. It is possible, indeed, to interpret the verse thus, "Sin is simply a departure from Christ. As long as you remain perfectly in Him you are perfectly holy: in so far as you sin, you are ceasing to abide in Him." Or we might assert, and with much appearance of reason, that ἀμαρτάνει, "sinneth," has the same meaning as ποιῶν τὴν ἀμαρτίαν, "committeth sin," in verse 4, so that the reference is to *habitual commission of sin with delight*. This is, indeed, essentially the same as the interpretation which we prefer to all others, as being the most natural and simple — "He that abideth in Him hates sin, and cannot willingly commit it: he is united with Him, and finds his supreme delight in the will of God." This leaves room for the most expansive views of the perfections and holiness of God, and the endless longings of the soul to attain unto them. The holiness of the believer is not conformity to any statute-book, but the growing conformity of the soul to the glorious character of God. In this sense we may assert, with the excellent Dr. Dwight, that there can be no limit set to the attainments of the soul in her heavenward

flight. Every new victory discovers new enemies to be conquered; every depth of divine love as we enter it reveals an ocean underneath it; and every height which we attain, like the traveller on Alpine regions, only enlarges the vision, and presents other lights in the distance;

“Till to perfection’s sacred height  
We nearer still may rise;  
And all we think, and all we do,  
Be pleasing in his eyes.”

The seventh verse continues the same subject, with a warning against the deceivers who sought to seduce them. These were probably Gnostic sectaries and apostates, who held that matter was essentially sinful, so that holiness in the present state was impossible. To these he refers probably in his warning—“Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.” He is the Head, and they are the members; He is the Vine, and they are the branches; He is the Foundation, and they are the living stones; so that they are united with Him, and share his righteousness and strength.

#### VII. SIN, SATAN, THE SON OF GOD, &c. (8—10).

This eighth verse is a fuller development of the same subject, but in other connections and relations.

1st. He that committeth sin (*ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν*) is of the devil, viz. a child of the devil (John viii. 44. Matt. xiii. 38). Sin is the mark of the children of the wicked one, as holiness is the mark of the children of God. Neither are yet perfect in their kind. The children of the devil are not yet at their worst, nor the children of God at their best; but yet the laws by which the two parties are guided are easily recognised and distinguished. Sin rules in the one, and holiness in the other. The tendencies are of an opposite and contrary nature, so that time, experience, grace, glory, and eternity itself, shall bring them farther, and ever farther, asunder.

2dly. "For the devil sinneth from the beginning" is given as the proof that those who commit sin are the children of the devil, for thus the devil has gone on in sin from the beginning of the world. This shews that ὁ ποιῶν refers to the continued action or work of sinning, otherwise the ὅτι, would express no reason for their being the children of the devil. The meaning is, he that *continueth in sin* is a child of the devil, for he has gone on in sin in a similar way from the beginning of the world. The Father and the child bear the same image, they follow the same ends, and shall receive the same doom. Here we see very clearly that sin has no tendency to reform itself, otherwise Satan would have repented long ago; but he continues at present the same as in the beginning, the malignant deceiver and murderer of souls.

3dly. ὁ διάβολος, "the devil," is not found in our epistle, save in this passage, including the tenth verse. It is the same as ΒΕΕΖΕΒΟΥΒ, or Beelzebub, the prince of the demons (Matt. ix. 34). He is everywhere found in active malignant opposition to God and Christ, and every thing noble and excellent in the world. He is false, cunning, and treacherous, the enemy of God and man, to whose depravity of disposition Herod's was but as earth to hell (Matt. iv. 1—13. xiii. 39. xxv. 41. Luke iv. 2, 3—13. viii. 12. John xiii. 2. Acts ii. 38. Eph. vi. 11. 1 Tim. iii. 6, 7. 2 Tim. ii. 26. Heb. ii. 14. James iv. 7. 1 Pet. v. 8. Jude 9. Rev. ii. 10. xii. 9, 12. xx. 2, 10). He is the head of the kingdom of darkness and the leader of the fallen hosts, as Christ is the head and sustainer of the new creation of God. He has many followers, whom he deceives and allures to destruction by his wiles, well knowing that, if he can rock them asleep here, and thus keep them from the Saviour, he shall have time enough hereafter to execute upon them his malignant intentions.

4thly. The *intention* of our Lord in assuming our nature is here stated to be (ἵνα λύσῃ) that He might destroy or demolish the works of the devil. See this use of the word in John ii. 19. Eph. ii. 14. 2 Pet. iii. 10—12. This is the same as the assertion of Paul (Heb. ii. 14), that the incarnation and death of



Jesus Christ were and are intended to destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil. Every thing in the form of evil is met and neutralized, or nullified, in the death of the Redeemer. Sin is taken away, the works of Satan are demolished, in the life, and death, and resurrection of Christ: death is reduced to a shadow, deprived of its sting, yea, abolished (2 Tim. i. 10), and Satan, the author of it, destroyed. How often, in this epistle, does the apostle direct our thoughts to the appearance and incarnation of the Son of God! This great act of unutterable love is held up to our admiration as the very fountain-head of Jehovah's love, from which the hungry and thirsty creation may draw all needful supplies. He connects with it our triumphs over sin, our resistance to the temptations of the devil, and our final possession of everlasting life.

5thly. The sentiment of the ninth verse is substantially the same as that of the sixth and seventh, but more strongly expressed. The expression "to be born of God" (verse 9) is of the same import as the "abiding in Him" (ver. 6), as they are both followed by the same consequence. John is the only apostle who applies the word *γεννάω*, "beget," like the Hebrew *לָדָה* (Deut. xxxii. 18. Jer. ii. 27. Ps. ii. 7), to God, as the author and source of spiritual life, and we shall now trace the various phases of his doctrine on this subject, referring at the same time to the corresponding expressions of the other apostles. (1) Believers are *born of water* (John iii. 5) in the sacrament of baptism, in which they receive the symbol and seal of a new and eternal life. This holy rite doth signify and seal our engrafting into Jesus Christ, our regeneration, the remission of our sins, and our hearty resolution to walk in newness of life. It is therefore called regeneration, or a new birth, because it is the initiatory ordinance by which we are brought into the visible church of the Redeemer. (2) Believers are *born* (begotten) *of the Holy Ghost* (John iii. 4, 5, 8), and of this inward spiritual birth baptism is the sign and seal, so that they are connected with one another in the word of God. The meaning of the

phrase "born of the Holy Ghost" is explained by the contrasted expression, "born of the flesh" (John iii. 6), which is the origin of all the evils of our fallen nature, all the works of the flesh, (Gal. v.), and all the corruptions that flow from the human heart. By this birth we are connected with the first Adam, and inherit his fallen and corrupted nature; by the birth of the Holy Spirit, proceeding from the Father through the risen Head, we are incorporated into the body of Christ, made members of the heavenly family, and heirs according to the promise. This new birth of John corresponds with the following expressions found scattered through the Scriptures. It is essentially the same as the conversion of the soul to God, the receiving of the new heart, the new name, the new nature; it is the repentance unto life which needs not to be repented of; it corresponds with the peace found in believing, with the turning from sin to righteousness, and being translated from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son. All these various expressions denote the one great change in the human soul which takes place when we leave the unsatisfying enjoyments of the world and take God for our portion, though they depict it in very different aspects. Then, again, this birth of the Holy Ghost connects the family directly with the elder brother, who was, in the highest sense of the word, "born of the Spirit," and, as such, He is the head of the regenerated church. So, also, this birth of the Holy Ghost is the fountain from which *all gifts* and endowments flow for the church and for the world. In this act of God the life is implanted which, in the various ages of the church, is manifested, in various ways, and in various fulness, according to the will of God, be it, as now, in the shallow streams of our present attainments, or in the pentecostal fulness of the apostolic age. It is the one life, the one indwelling of the Holy Ghost, the one endowment of the Holy Ghost given by the ascended Redeemer as our outfit for the wilderness-journey. (3) Believers are *born of God*, which expression connects the new life of the soul with the heavenly

Father, from whom all gifts and graces proceed. This is contrasted with our being born of blood or of the will of man (John i. 13); it is the source of sanctification and perfection (1 John iii. 9); it is identified with, and manifested by our love to God (1 John iv. 7); it is connected with true faith on the Lord Jesus Christ (1 John v. 1); and this birth from God, like faith, gives us the victory over the world (1 John v. 4). The word, as applied to God, would be more consistently translated *begotten* than *born*, and most of the translations and commentaries have done so.

6thly. You are not to deceive yourselves in this matter however, says the apostle, for this regeneration is no mere speculation or dogma, but a vital operative principle, so that the children of God are adorned by the fruits of righteousness. "In this the children of God are manifested and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother (verse 10)." The proof, therefore, of our being the regenerated children of God are "righteousness" and "brotherly love." This is our calling as God's dear children, even to abound in the fruits of righteousness as trees of his planting, and to walk in love, as Christ also loved us and gave himself for us. He, therefore, that walks not in the fellowship of the Righteous One, and in the communion and love of the brethren, is not born of God. The incorruptible seed of the word (*σπέρμα*), which the Spirit plants in the hearts of the children of God, is not his, and all his pretensions are hollow and vain. Righteousness is the white robe of the saint, and he that has it not cannot join the palm-bearing companies in the upper sanctuary. Brotherly love is the life-blood of the mystical body, the sap that flows through the vine, the cement of the living temple, and those who have it not are strangers and foreigners, who have no right to enter into the holy city or partake of the marriage-supper of the Lamb.

## CHAPTER IX.

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Ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους.

Οὐ καθὼς Κάϊν ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ ἦν, καὶ ἔσφαξε τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ· καὶ χάριν τίνος ἔσφαξεν αὐτόν; ὅτι τὰ ἔργα αὐτοῦ πονηρὰ ἦν, τὰ δὲ τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ αὐτοῦ, δίκαια.

Μὴ θαυμάζετε, ἀδελφοί μου, εἰ μισεῖ ὑμᾶς ὁ κόσμος.

Ἡμεῖς οἶδαμεν ὅτι μεταβεβήκαμεν ἐκ τοῦ θανάτου εἰς τὴν ζωὴν, ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τοὺς ἀδελφούς· ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν, μένει ἐν τῷ θανάτῳ.

Πᾶς ὁ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ, ἀνθρωποκτόνος ἐστί· καὶ οἶδατε ὅτι πᾶς ἀνθρωποκτόνος οὐκ ἔχει ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν.

Ἐν τούτῳ ἐγνώκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην, ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ ἔθηκε· καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ὑπὲρ τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὰς ψυχὰς τιθέναι.

For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another :

Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

We know that we have passed from death unto life ; because we love the brethren. He that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer : and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Hereby perceive we the love of *God*, because he laid down his life for us : and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.



Ὅς δ' ἂν ἔχη τὸν βίον τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ θεωρῇ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ χρεῖαν ἔχοντα, καὶ κλείσῃ τὰ σπλάγχνα αὐτοῦ ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, πῶς ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ μένει ἐν αὐτῷ;

Τεκνία μου, μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν λόγῳ μὴδὲ γλώσσῃ, ἀλλ' ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ.

Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας ἐσμὲν, καὶ ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πείσομεν τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν.

Ὅτι ἐὰν καταγινώσκῃ ἡμῶν ἡ καρδιά, ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ Θεὸς τῆς καρδίας ἡμῶν, καὶ γινώσκει πάντα.

Ἀγαπητοὶ, ἐὰν ἡ καρδιά ἡμῶν μὴ καταγινώσκῃ ἡμῶν, παρρησίαν ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν.

Καὶ ὁ ἐὰν αἰτῶμεν, λαμβάνομεν παρ' αὐτοῦ, ὅτι τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηροῦμεν, καὶ τὰ ἀρεστὰ ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ ποιοῦμεν.

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ, ἵνα πιστεῖσῶμεν τῷ ὀνόματι τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, καὶ ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, καθὼς ἔδωκεν ἐντολὴν ἡμῖν.

Καὶ ὁ τηρῶν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ, ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν αὐτῷ· καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν.

But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God.

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

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THE connection between the foregoing passage and the eleventh verse is maintained by the particle *οὔτι*, *because*, and is to be traced thus: "The children of God are manifested to be such by their brotherly love" (verse 10); and this is one of the original principles of the gospel, "For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that ye should love one another.

I. Let us attend, therefore, to this *original message* of the Gospel dispensation, that we may see how far it has found acceptance in our own minds, and guided the affections of our hearts. This is important, seeing it is the test of our discipleship, and one, too, which I fear is often neglected in the present generation of the church. It is the high and unselfish principle of our divine religion to reduce the whole human family, all ruined and divided as it is, to one company of faithful, believing men, among whom the brotherly principles of love,

respect, deference, and mutual joy, should rule supreme. One life, generated by the Spirit of God, should flow through them all; one mighty, all-pervading sympathy of love to God and man rule all hearts.

1st. The *principles* of this brotherhood are different from those of all other corporations on the earth, and mark very distinctly the divine hand that gave them. They are general, and have no material or geographical bounds, like the principles that regulate Islam and other false religions. In this holy brotherhood the door stands open for the good and the excellent of all nations, whatever be their country, colour, or clime. There is no local unity, like Mecca, Mount Gerizim, or Jerusalem, to materialize the affections and lead away the mind from the spiritual God, and the home which He has provided for us above. As Adam was the natural head from whom, as a centre, the race proceeded to occupy and possess the globe, so there is a spiritual family, whose central and sustaining Head is the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, from whom the hidden life which pervades them flows. There are, in fact, only two permanent corporations in the world, and from them all the others flow—the *family* and the *church*, the first being more specially related to God the Father, and the second to Jesus the Redeemer. The beauty of the first has become marred by the stain of defilement, while, in the second, grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life. Every thing conspires to make the brethren love one another. It is the message which ye have heard from the beginning, that *ye should love one another*. They are all members of the same family of God; they are all redeemed by the same precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without spot or blemish; they share the same dangers of the way; they are guided by the same heavenly hand; and they are cheered by the same promises of a bright and glorious future.

2dly. How, then, does it come to pass that this principle of brotherly love is so weak in us and so often violated? Look at

our own England, and tell me, is not the principle of brotherly love, which should be the binding principle of our Christian fellowship, cold and inoperative? How many stumbling-blocks stand in the way of a hearty union among us, and yet, with the exception of a handful of Papists, or Puseyites, and Unitarians, not worth being mentioned in any general calculation, we all believe essentially the same doctrines and duties. The spirit of love, if it were strong, would soon break down the external impediments that sin or Satan has erected to keep us asunder, and present the whole nation, or at least the whole church in the nation, as one band of brothers, all loving and serving one another. But the ambition of the papacy began the divisive principle, by creating terms of fellowship which the Scripture knows nothing of; and the Protestant nations which have thrown off the papal yoke have not hitherto been able to abandon the popish principles of schism and unbrotherly separation.

3dly. It is pleasing, however, to the Christian mind to observe that the pure principle of brotherly love is making progress among us, and very many of the redeemed children of God are reaching each other the hand of Christian fellowship over the partition walls which unfortunately divide us. There is a longing for a unity of a deeper, nobler kind than the external headship of Rome, even the unity of the apostolic age, when love to the crucified Redeemer was the bond of union, and one spirit animated them all. We see examples of this noble tendency everywhere, and we pray that they may be multiplied a thousand-fold, until the feeling and sympathy of brotherly love shall interpenetrate and unite the whole Christian church. Jesus is the Mediator, and Satan is the divider. May we feel, therefore, that the tie of the sprinkling of his blood upon our hearts, the bond of a common fellowship of love in the Holy Ghost, is stronger than all the cords of sectarianism! What God has joined let not man keep asunder. Let us love sincerely and honestly every soul of Adam on which the divine image is



stamped by the refiner's hand. Let us cherish the spirit of our verse, the spirit of brotherly love,

"Till names, and sects, and parties fall  
And Jesus Christ be all in all."

II. The apostle now gives us *the example of Cain* (ver. 12) as the head and leader of the unbrotherly band in whom the principles of wrath, strife, and revenge reigned. It is not necessary to maintain, with the Rabbis, that Cain was literally the son of Satan—"Quum projecisset serpens ille immunditiam suam in Evam," &c.—"Equidem Cain fuit filius spiritus immundi qui est serpens malus; Abel vero fuit filius Adami." But though we may not be able to follow Rabbi Eliezer in his speculations, it is nevertheless necessary, with the apostle, to hold forth Cain as the example of all unbrotherly affections and satanic influences. Indeed, if we supply the ellipsis of the verse, as Macknight and others do, the Jewish opinion will be justified, in a spiritual sense, "*Not being begotten* of the wicked one, as Cain was," &c. Grotius supplies the ellipsis by *ἐμὲν* dependent upon the *ἴνα* of the foregoing verse thus, "That we should love one another, and not be as Cain was, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother." Our translators follow Beza's "*qui ex illo malo erat*," (who was of that wicked one,) which, however well it may present the meaning in our language, is utterly contrary to the genius and forms of the Greek. I know of no examples in which the relative *ὃς* is left out of the intermediate or subsidiary sentence; and even if such examples existed, the mode of supplying the ellipsis adopted by Macknight or Grotius is much more simple and natural. But what is the meaning of the verse? That *ὁ πονηρός*, "the wicked one," means Satan, there cannot be the least doubt. It is synonymous with *ὁ διαβόλος*, "the devil," in verse 10, and is altogether in keeping with the style of the apostle John, and the language of the New Testament generally. See Matt. xiii. 19, 38, 39. Eph. vi. 16. 1 John ii. 13, 14. iii. 12. v. 18; to which might be

added, probably, Matt. v. 37. vi. 13. Luke xi. 4. John xvii. 15. 1 John v. 19. It is, then, the assertion of our text that *Cain was of the devil*, and, by the necessity of the comparison, it is implied that all who love not the brethren are, in like manner, of the devil, or the wicked one. How are they of the wicked one?

1st. They are not created by him, nor are they physically generated of him, for the Scripture gives no such power to the enemy of souls; but they are still, in a certain sense, the children of Satan, as believers are called the children of God (John viii. 44). They are degenerated by the wicked spirit, as believers are regenerated by the Holy Ghost. In this sense they are ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ, "of the wicked one." Compare iii. 10. John vi. 70.

2dly. There is a kingdom of darkness and death opposed to the promise of the everlasting kingdom of Christ, and Satan is represented as the *power* that pervades the darkness (Col. i. 13); as the head and inspirer of the principalities and powers of iniquity and wickedness against which we wrestle (Eph. vi. 12); as the author and sustainer of that death, moral and physical, which has reigned so long and so tyrannically over the children of men (Heb. ii. 14). In this sense Cain and his murderous successors are of the wicked one (ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ). They belong to his kingdom, and have refused the proclamations of liberty and redemption announced in the Gospel. The head of this kingdom, under the devil, established upon the earth, is anti-christ, who is called the lawless one, son of perdition, or the false apostle and traitor, and the man of sin (2 Thess. ii.); and the whole mass of his followers, being murderous and fratricidal in their dispositions, are, in a special sense, ἐκ τοῦ πονηροῦ, "of the devil." His spirit inspires their murderous dispositions; his presence and temptations lead them into the paths of vice and crime, while whispering into their conscience "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. He weaves the winding-sheet of souls, and wraps them in the gloom of everlasting death.

3dly. They are of *the wicked one* in the sense of belonging to

him. They do his work, and they shall receive his reward. They are his servants, subjects, slaves upon earth, where he treats them mildly and prudently; and they shall be his prisoners and victims in eternity, where he will have time enough to exercise his malignity upon them without caution or reserve. They are his children, his subjects, and his final victims.

III. The *reason* or ground of this murderous disposition is given, "And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." This is a very general principle, and has been exemplified in all ages of the church. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, *therefore* the world hateth you." We observe, here, there are two fountains from which sorrow flows in upon the church, and these are *sin* and *righteousness*. When we sin against God, ourselves, or our neighbour, and are, in consequence, chastised by the rod of a jealous Father's love, it is what the Scripture calls being *buffeted for our faults*; and when we bear it patiently, and without a murmur, we deserve neither thanks nor praise (1 Pet. ii. 20). This is one great source of our sufferings; and it is manifest, however blessed and beneficial to our souls grace may make them, we are, in such cases, neither suffering with Christ nor for his sake. We are suffering because we sinned; we are reaping what we sowed; and, whatever be our agonies, and however patiently borne, they are not the sufferings of Christ, but our own sufferings: our own reproaches, and not the reproaches of Christ, have fallen upon us (Ps. lxix. 9. Rom. xv. 3). But if, on the other hand, we are found doing the will of God, like the prophets, apostles, and martyrs of the church, and then, owing to our faithfulness, the cross is laid upon us, that is thankworthy in the sight of God (1 Pet. ii. 19, 20), and we are fellow-sufferers with the Son of God. Our works are righteous, as our text asserts of Abel's, and therefore the

enmity and opposition of wicked men. We are shewing ourselves, in that case, to be worthy members of the martyred body to which we belong, and hence the same principles of evil and enmity will be excited against us (though in a less degree, owing to our partial sanctification,) which were roused into such fury against the holy Lamb of God. Hence the times of persecution are the times of the church's moral glories, when, for the sake of her Head and Redeemer, she braves the indignation and enmity of wicked men. Storm is better than stagnation. The Christian church never presented such an unworthy aspect to the contemplation of men and angels as when she lay in the slumber of death during the middle ages. She was rocked asleep in the arms of Delilah, and shorn of the seven locks of her strength. *Deus habet horas et moras.* The times and the seasons are in our heavenly Father's hand, and we may rest satisfied that He doeth all things well. One lesson of deep importance we may well learn from this verse, and from suffering in general, and that is, the fearful depth of our fallen condition. Righteousness creates envy among us, and generates the murderous dispositions which led to the murder of Abel, and kindled, in later times, the fires of persecution, so that we may state it as a principle verified in Christ, and in the history of his church, that the holier a man or a community is, the more will be excited the hatred and enmity of ungodly men. So deeply are we sunk, that we look with envy, contempt, and hatred on what is nobler and more excellent than ourselves. We would remain in our apostacy and vileness, and reduce every thing which claims a nobler origin, and seeks a higher end, to our own level. This base and radically-corrupt principle is the root of all persecution for righteousness sake, and its developement can be traced in the history of the church and the world from the days of Cain to the present time. We may say of the ruler of Tuscany and his prisoners, as John says of Cain and Abel, "And wherefore does he seek to imprison and kill all that read the word of



God? Because his own works are evil and his brother's righteous."

IV. *μισεῖ ὑμᾶς ὁ κόσμος*. The hatred of the world towards the children of God is taken for granted in the Scripture, as an unavoidable necessity, which is so common, and so long continued, that we need not be astonished at it. "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you," says the apostle John; and the Saviour himself says, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (John xv. 18). This hostility, then, between the believer and the unbeliever, or, more generally speaking, between the *church* and the *world*, between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan, is everywhere asserted, both by the Redeemer himself and his apostles.

1st. The cause and origin of this enmity are the same as in all cases of war and bloodshed—a *lie*. All warfare is owing to a lie, and peace can be established only through the belief of the truth. From the personal hostility of the duellists to the sweep of annihilating armies, in which the ruin of nations and continents is involved, we can trace every form of war to the influence of lies. Applying this principle to the world and the church, and the hostility existing between them, we can easily trace the nature and origin of the enmity. The world goes on in its old course, with its hopes and its fears, its dreams of enjoyment, and its plans of worldly ambition, as the proper end and destiny of the human mind, and, in the midst of this turmoil and ardour, the believing church rises up and gives the lie to all its speculations and hopes, saying, in effect, "All that you are seeking after are vanities and lies, which can neither satisfy you here, nor give you a foretaste of a glorious future: ye are wearying yourselves after vanity, and spending your substance for that which cannot profit. Jesus Christ alone, and the kingdom which He has set up, are the fit and proper objects of our longings and desires. His love, his grace, his

heavenly likeness, the views of the character of God which He has opened up to us ; the gifts, and graces, and fruits of the Comforter which He makes over to us ; the promises of glory and immortality which He holds over us ; these are the soul's satisfying and eternal portion, and without these all else is nothing. Hence the enmity. It is occasioned by a lie. By the belief of *a lie* we were entangled in the net of Satan in the beginning, and by the belief of his lies we are kept in bondage still. The belief of the truth is the only remedy for this spiritual thralldrom, and this can never be accomplished but by the practical assertion, in word and deed, that the ways of the world are deceitful and vain.

“He is the freeman whom the truth makes free,  
And all are slaves besides.”

2dly. As to the *nature* of this hatred we would observe, that it is natural it should vary in proportion to the weakness or decision of our Christian character. A faithful, laborious, witness-bearing church will always be exposed to the scorn and persecution of the world ; they will be called zealots, fanatics, and enthusiasts, who disturb the peace of families, bring disorder into peaceful provinces, and, in fact, turn the world upside down ; their name will become a mockery and a reproach among men ; and, if the worldly-minded be at the head of affairs, they may prepare, if they continue faithful, for bonds, and imprisonment, and death. Were the faith and the fervour of the apostolic age to return again, it would, I fear, make wild work with much that we are glorying in, and awaken, in many lands at least, the spirit which, in the days of old, ignited the faggots around the martyr, and made the market-places and the theatres swim with blood. It was the effusion of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost—the endowment of the church for her glorious mission—which awakened such fierce and murderous persecution against the apostles of the Lord, and all the faithful who believed on his name. It was *too* heavenly,

*too* God-like for our sin-stained world. Be not alarmed, therefore, when ye hear of the persecution of the saints. "Marvel not," says the apostle; but I would add, rather, marvel that, with such principles to guide us, with such hopes before us, with such an example to imitate, with such wickedness to contend against, we should be *hated so little*. That is indeed marvellous. We are at ease in Zion, forgetting, I fear, that the commands of our Lord are upon us, and that we are called to something more than a life of inglorious ease.

"Eat, drink, and die; what can the rest avail us?  
So said the royal sage, Sardanapalus."

Such is not to be our language. We are members of the everlasting temple of God, which neither floods nor tempests shall overthrow; and if we bear the image of our Master, we must proceed without intermission in this spiritual warfare. How many of us ministers, who profess to receive the Holy Ghost at our ordination, seem speedily to forget whether there be any Holy Ghost or not! The world creeps in upon us, and we forget that the day of Pentecost was to prepare us for the hatred and persecution of the world, and all that might befall us in our heavenward pilgrimage. If we give up that we can live at ease in the world: if we cherish the presence and suggestions of the Holy Ghost we must expect enmity and persecution. Our zeal burns no longer as in the days of old. If the respectable names of Canterbury and York, Durham and Exeter, and all the redoubtable champions of Christianity in the episcopate of England, were occasionally to be seen in the high places of the field, to fight the battles of the faith; if one deputation was waiting on the Grand Turk, another upon the Emperor of China, another upon the Pope of Rome (and they have the means of travel), to try to lead them to the Gospel of Christ;—if, in one word, the apostolic love and earnestness were again anywhere kindled among us, the reproach of worldliness would be rolled away, and Christianity

would make conquests, as in the primitive ages. The martyrdom of two bishops overthrew popery and established the true religion in England; and if a missionary bishop or two were burned or beheaded in Rome or Constantinople, for the testimony of Jesus, it would do more for the Gospel of Christ, both at home and abroad, than a great many speeches and subscriptions, though these also are good and profitable to men. I am as firmly persuaded as I am of my own existence that it is this all-venturing, death-defying spirit of love to the souls of men to which the missionary churches of the apostolic ages owe their noblest triumphs; and till it shall please God to kindle it among us again we must remain shorn of the raven locks of our strength.

3dly. You ask when shall this *hatred* cease? It shall never cease till the *world* ceases. For it is written, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John ii. 17). The wheat and the tares grow together till the harvest; the sheep and the goats are separated only at the judgment of the quick; and the rest promised to the saints (of which Baxter writes so well) shall be realized only "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. i. 5—9). Many people think, indeed, that, by means of our earnest endeavours, the evils will become so mitigated, that persecution for Christ's sake will soon be impossible. But the truth is, it is not the world that has become better, but the church that has become worse. There is no promise in the Scripture of rest for the church (save the peace in believing, which we always have), or the overthrow of antichrist, or the passing away of the world, till the Lord comes in his glory.

V. *μετάβασις*, *the great change*, mentioned in the 14th verse, is frequently insisted upon in the New Testament, as the



necessary commencement of the Christian life. We have passed from death unto life. This takes it for granted that the kingdom in which we were born was the kingdom of corruption and death, where Satan, the prince of this world, reigned, and is in perfect harmony with all the Scripture delineations of our natural state (Eph. ii. 1, 5. Rom. v. 5, 6. viii. 10). The greatness and importance of this change are marked very particularly by the expressions used in regard to it. This is the new birth unto righteousness, without which no man can see or enter into the kingdom of God; this is the renewal of the heart by the faith which works by love, without which we cannot see God; this is the change in the affections, desires, and sympathies of the soul, called repentance, regeneration, the new heart, peace in believing, deliverance from the power of darkness, conversion, coming out of the world, looking unto Jesus, &c.; all which denote the one great act of God's Holy Spirit in implanting the love of God and righteousness in the fallen human mind. "We were darkness, but now are we light in the Lord: old things have passed away, behold all things have become new. The power of the love of God has at length conquered the obstinacy of our carnal minds, and from henceforth, as the children of our heavenly Father, and servants of Christ, it is our delight to do the will of God. He is our aim, and upon Him all our love is set. Our whole nature is, in its deepest principles, revolutionized, the hidden fountains of our life purified by the grace of God, and new hopes of a bright and glorious future shine around our path. "*We know*," says the apostle, "that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." It is the privilege of the believer to know his state. He is not in darkness, but in the light, and he knows what he was, what he is, and whither he is going. The evidence to his soul is abundant and various, and he should sooner doubt his own existence than question the reality of God's love to him. "By their fruits ye shall know them" (Gal. v.), says the Saviour: men do not

gather grapes of thorns, nor figs from thistles. We have the inward evidence of the Spirit of God bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. We have the outward evidence of an humble walk with God in the fulfilment of his holy will. We have peace in believing the record which God hath given of his Son, and we know it by the joy which it sheds abroad in our hearts; or, if you prefer to follow the test in our text, given by the beloved disciple, then let us say, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because *we love the brethren.*"

VI. Ὁ μισῶν, *the hater*. Hence the apostle asserts, in the fifteenth verse, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer." He is spiritually begotten of the seed of Cain, and cherishes the murderous sentiments of his father in his heart. From this verse it is manifest, that *not to love* the brethren and to *hate them* are one and the same thing in the mind of the apostle, even as *not to know* (iii. 1) means to persecute and *hate*. Hatred, want of love, is the teeming fountain from which so many human miseries proceed, and the only medicine that can sweeten the bitter waters is the spirit of love. Even according to human laws a man may have taken away a life, and yet be no murderer; while, on the other hand, we may be really murderers, and deserve to die, without shedding a drop of human blood. The crime lies in the will, in the motive, in the hating, murderous disposition of the heart. This is especially the case in the divine law of love, which enters into the secrets of the inner man, and judges according to the absolute holiness of God. This is, and must be, the principle of the righteous administration of God, who judges, not according to the outward appearances of things, but according to reality and truth; and hence covetousness is idolatry (Col. iii. 5); the unholy look of the eye is adultery (Matt. v. 28); and the hater of his brethren is a manslayer. This is one of the peculiarities of the Christian system, and proves that it never could have originated with

man. Everywhere we recognise the all-present eye of God, which makes manifest the secrets and intents of the heart : everywhere we feel ourselves, in our Christian walk, under the guidance of the holy, heart-searching God. May we never forget this ! “Thou, God, seest me,” is the proper expression, at all times and in all places. He adds, “And ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” The  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \delta\ \mu\iota\sigma\omega\acute{\nu}$  —  $\acute{\omicron}\nu\kappa\ \acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota$ , “every hater — hath not eternal life,” is a Hebrew form of expression which is frequently found in Scripture, and is common in the East at the present time, as I have often heard it at Damascus. (See Matt. xxiv. 22. Rom. iii. 20. Eph. v. 5. 1 John ii. 29.) The Arabs say,  $\text{كل كفام الله لا يحب}$ , “every unbeliever God does not love,” viz. God loves no unbeliever. This is the same as the  $\text{לֹא} \text{—} \text{זֶה}$  of the Hebrews. (See the forms in Dan. viii. 4. xii. 10. Ex. xii. 16. Gen. iii. 1. Ex. x. 15. Lev. iii. 17. Prov. xii. 21.) The Shemitish languages have, in fact, no exact equivalent to the  $\acute{\omicron}\nu\delta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ , *niemand*, *none*, of the modern languages, and must necessarily use “*All shall not*” for “*none shall*,” if they wish to express that sort of negation. The sentence “I have nothing” must, both in Hebrew and in Arabic, be expressed by the form “Not to me a thing.” We see many examples of this in the Hebrew Scriptures. It is, however, far more important to observe the *sentiment* of the apostle than the form of expression. He assures us that no murderer, viz. no man who hateth his brother, hath eternal life abiding in him. He is no Christian, and can have no claim upon the promises of life and immortality. He has not passed from death unto life ; he has never even tasted that the Lord is gracious ; nor is his heart renewed by the power of the Holy Ghost. He has not eternal life, and, by the principle of *contraries*, which occurs again and again in this epistle, we must say, “he has eternal death abiding in him.” Brotherly love, therefore, is the test of our discipleship, and we should try our own spirits by it in our daily intercourse with the children of God. Do we really love them ? and do we love them all ?

and do we love them, not because they are *of us*, but simply and solely because they *are of Christ*? In that case we may truly say, "He that loveth the brethren, whom he hath seen, loveth also the Father and the Elder Brother, whom he hath not seen," and the evidence of his sonship is complete and satisfactory.

VII. *The great example of love.* There has never been a question that the person referred to in the sixteenth verse is Christ, whose example is held up for our imitation; yet the ways of supplying the ellipsis after τὴν ἀγάπην have been very various. Many of the ancient commentators supply τοῦ Θεοῦ, and read, as we do in the English text, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down his life for us;" and this may be justified from Acts xx. 28, as both reasonable and scriptural; for the proof of this love, viz. *his laying down his life* for us, can be true only of Θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ (2 Cor. v. 19), "God in Christ;" and so Whitby and others explain it, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because his Son laid down his life for us." Others, not wishing to bring two persons into the text, supply the words τοῦ Χριστοῦ, and read "Hereby perceive we the love of Christ, because He laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our life for the brethren;" while Doddridge and others, following certain ancient authorities, supply the word οὐτοῦ, and read, "Hereby perceive we *his* love, because He laid down his life for us." Lücke argues against all these, and reads the clause thus, "Hereby we perceive the true principle of brotherly love, that Christ laid down his life for our advantage," which is by far the most miserable exposition I have seen. Luther and De Wette supply nothing, and translate thus, "Daran haben wir erkannt die Liebe dass er sein Leben for uns gelassen hat," which must stand in English so, "Hereby perceive we the love, that He hath laid down his life for us," and which means this, Hereby, viz. by the principle of brotherly love, we have recognised the love of Christ in laying down his life for us, and we ought to



lay down our life for the brethren." But leaving these critical minutiae, let us attend to the substance of the text, concerning which there can be no diversity of sentiment. It teaches the following:

1st. That the love of Christ, or the love of God in Christ, is the glorious example of self-denying, self-sacrificing love held up for our imitation in the Scripture. He is the fountain from which all excellence flows, and the loving head of the church and the universe, whom all the members are to imitate in their walk and conversation. He is not only the Redeemer, but the example. His sufferings are of two kinds, propitiatory and exemplary, and we are enabled to venerate Him as the sin-atoning Lamb, and follow Him as our leader and guide to the better land. He died for our sins, as a true and proper sacrifice and propitiatory offering, and, as such, his sufferings are *sui generis*, and can never be either shared or imitated. (See 1 Cor. i. 13. ii. 2, 8. Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45. Eph. i. 7. Tit. ii. 14.) These, and many similar Scriptures, teach the fundamental doctrine of the atoning death of Jesus Christ, without which, indeed, nothing can satisfy and quiet the conscience of the sinner. On the other hand, we should never forget that He suffered, lived, and died as our example also; and in this respect we suffer with Him and for Him, are planted in the likeness of his death, are partakers of his sufferings, are crucified with Him, and are predestinated to be conformed to his image. (See Col. i. 24. 2 Cor. i. 5, 6. Phil. ii. 10. 2 Tim. i. 8. ii. 10. Acts ix. 4. 1 Cor. iv. 10.) Keep this clearly-marked distinction in mind, and you will have your answer for Socinians and others, who say that Christ's sufferings are the same as ours; so that, if He made atonement for our sins in dying, we, too, must make atonement for the sins of the brethren when we lay down our lives for them.

2dly. *τῷ ὅτι ψυχὴν*, *to lay down the life*, does not mean, as Grotius has suggested (on John x.), merely to expose or hazard one's life, but *actually to die* for the brethren. (Compare John

iii. 37, 38. xv. 13. 1 John iii. 16.) Christ, our example, actually died for his people; and we, walking in his footsteps, should, in proper time and place, lay down our lives for the brethren. The highest, noblest proof of love is in suffering and in death, and the affection is not full-grown and genuine which will not submit to it. Christ's love, indeed, differed in some respects from ours. His was the love of a *superior* to an *inferior*, even the love of the Son of God manifested to his creatures, and ours is the love of equals to equals, for in the sight of God all believers are alike. His love was to his *enemies*: our love to the brethren is the love of a friend towards his friends: as it is written, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man should lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). Let us therefore cherish this principle of brotherly love, that it may gain strength and stature in our hearts, for it is the noblest evidence of our adoption, and the sweetest foretaste of the communion of saints above. Even the human form of this affection is celebrated among the nations. "*Pulchrum est pro patria mori*"—"to die for our country"—is a sentiment which the heathen could estimate; and it was entirely on this principle that the famous canticle of M. Joseph Rouget, called the Marsellaise Hymn, produced such astonishing effects in the time of the French Revolution. Let brotherly love continue among us, and let us owe no man any thing but to love one another.

VIII. *The poor brother; alms.* Surely, says our apostle, if this brotherly love exists in your hearts, you will not neglect the poor of the flock; "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" You ought to be willing to lay down your life for the brethren, and you are not willing to give alms. It is the will of your heavenly Father that the poor should never cease from the land, and hitherto they have never ceased from the land, nor is it likely they shall; and for this very purpose they are permitted to

remain, that they might draw forth your affections in manifold streams of kindness and charity. It is more blessed to give than to receive, and God himself is supremely and universally blessed because He is the supreme and universal giver. When you see a needy brother, therefore, the Lord, whom we love and serve, is presenting you with an opportunity of sharing his own blessedness and joy. He, who was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich; and ye, entering into the spirit of your divine Master, should not shut up your bowels of compassion against the poor and needy brethren, but distribute freely of your abundance, as every one hath need. The Bible does not lay down any absolute rule as to the proportion of our substance which we ought to dedicate to the purposes of benevolence, but, treating us as free men, whose hearts the Lord hath opened, leaves it entirely to our own judgment and generosity. He makes, however, the motive very strong, and surrounds us with the varied and multiplied obligations of his grace and love. We have this world's good, and all that good is from Him: we see the poor brother in distress, and both the brother and his need are also from Him. He identifies the needy brother with himself, saying, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Ye all belong to the same heavenly family, and, however different may be your earthly condition, ye shall all sit down together with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. One blood was shed for you all, one great Father loves you all, and one quickening Spirit prepares you all equally for the upper sanctuary. Let brotherly love, therefore, fill all your hearts with its heavenly flame, that your love to God (*ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ*) may be realized and manifested before all. Love to the seen is the medium of love to the unseen. We fix our regards upon the children, and from them our affections flow onwards and upwards to our Father which is in heaven. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John

iv. 20). It is impossible; and all that you say about love to God, and fellowship with the people of God, and the blessed hopes of immortality, are vain and hypocritical, while ye shut up your bowels of compassion against the needy and naked brethren for whom Christ died. How dwelleth the love of God in you?

IX. *Love in word.* How natural does the 18th verse flow from the foregoing! Your love is the sincere affection of the heart, and it burns so steadily that you should be willing to die for the brethren, as our blessed Redeemer laid down his life for us. I take λόγῳ and γλώσσῃ to be a varied expression for the same idea of pretended, hypocritical affection, as ἔργῳ καὶ ἀληθείᾳ, “in deed and in truth,” are a varied description of the real and genuine. Most of the authorities have τῇ before γλώσσῃ, and ἔν before ἔργῳ, but the meaning seems in both cases to be the same. In Rom. xv. 18 the ἔν is left out, and Lücke thinks this is more agreeable to the usages of the language. The substance of the verse is, to recommend a sincere and holy love to the brethren. We have to do with Him who sees the heart and knows what is in man; so that appearances have no value in his sight. The lip- and eye-service may for a time deceive our fellow-men, but with God it is altogether different. No fig-leaves can screen our hypocrisies from his righteous judgment; and therefore let our love be in deed and in truth, viz. let it be operative, truthful, holy love, which is, in the sight of God, of great price.

X. *Assurance.* It is the longing desire of our hearts to know what our state really is before God, and, if possible, to obtain some well-grounded assurance of our acceptance with Him. We feel the principles of death and dissolution working within us; we see our fellow-mortals falling around us under the stroke of death; our reason, conscience, the Bible, universal tradition, all assure us there is a world beyond the grave, and



surely nothing can be more natural than the question, "What is our state before God? Are we really and truly his dear children, so that we have a right to appropriate the promises of the Gospel?" We have the answer in the 19th verse, and in the two words ἐν τούτῳ, which mean, "By this heartfelt love to the brethren we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him." *To be of the truth*, ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας, is the same as *to be of God*, children of his grace, and heirs of his heavenly kingdom (John i. 14, 17. viii. 32, 40, 45, 46); and especially see the ὁ ὧν ἐκ, "every one that is of the truth" (John xxviii. 37). If we are of the truth, then we are, according to the mind of the apostle, God's dear children, and none shall pluck us out of our Father's hand: we are then, in reality, the trees of his planting, the vessels of his mercy, the epistles of his manifold wisdom, the living stones in his temple, the members of his dear Son, and the heirs of his eternal kingdom and glory. All this we are, and far more still, if we can say, "We are of the truth;" and the way to attain unto this assurance is by the exercise of brotherly love. "If ye love the brethren ye are of the truth, and shall assure your hearts before God." The blessed assurance that we are the children of God is frequently mentioned in our epistle, and the evidences of it are the following: we know that we are true believers by keeping the commandments of God (ii. 3); we know it by the love of God perfected in the heart (ii. 5); we know it by the anointing from the Holy One (ii. 20, 27); by abiding in Christ we obtain confidence in the day of God (ii. 28); we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren (iii. 14); by sincere love to the children of God we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him (iii. 19); and, finally, we know that He dwelleth in us by the witness of the Holy Spirit (iii. 24. iv. 13). Such is the testimony which the apostle gives to the doctrine of the believer's assurance or confidence before God; and, practically, you will ever find that the quiet, loving, humble Christians are

those who have most of this peaceful assurance. Brotherly love is still the test, in the majority of cases; and certainly, where you find the spirit of complaint, suspicion, and distrust of one another, you need expect nothing of this heavenly assurance. You cannot command this confidence, for, like every thing else, it is a gift of God; but you can use the means God has appointed for obtaining it, and, in the diligent use of these, you will not long wait in vain. Come to the cross, and behold the bleeding Lamb, and say, "This is the Son of God, and all this is for me! It is verily a divine truth that God is love, and that his dying Son is the proof of his love to me." By habitual meditation on the Saviour's person and work, on the freeness and fulness of his love to sinful man, you will gradually grow up into the firm confidence of his love. Your way before Him will become brighter; duties will gradually change into privileges; for you will do all for his name's sake. Communion with Him will ripen into the cleaving intimacies of unutterable joy, so that your life, walk, and conversation will be in God and with God. Your prayers will become more heavenly, your hopes ever brighter, until, in the firm but well-grounded confidence of eternal life, you can say, without presumption, "We know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before God: we are resting on his promises, and we are sure they shall never fail." The 20th verse bears on the same subject of our confidence before God, but the text is very difficult, and may be very variously translated. The difficulties of the verse are the following: the *punctuation* is uncertain: I follow the mode of punctuating in our common text, though Dr. Fritsche argues strongly against it. He makes a full-stop after ἐσμεν, and, commencing the new sentence with καὶ ἐμπροσθεν, translates thus: "Et coram Deo *h.e.* Deum intuiti et reveriti, animos nostros flectemus (np. ad amorem vitæ factisque ostendendum) quia, si animus nos (hujis officii prætermis- si), condemnet, quia major est, inquam, Deus animo nostro et omnia scit;" viz. "And before God, that is to say, looking unto

God, and standing in awe of Him, we shall bend our minds (to the duty of loving the brethren in life and in act), because, if our mind condemn us (this duty being neglected), because, I say, God is greater than our mind, and knoweth all things." The objection to this is, that the translation<sup>a</sup> is both unnatural and elliptical. Surely *πείθειν τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν* does not naturally mean to bend our hearts to the duty of brotherly love. Besides, this *assuring of the heart* before God refers, without doubt, to the same as *ἔχειν παρρησίαν*, our *having confidence* before God (verse 21). These are, in fact, one and the same thing. Others, not knowing what to do with the second *ὅτι* (which certainly comes upon the reader very awkwardly), drop it altogether, as is done by Doddridge, by Jerome in the Vulgate, our translators, and in the French version of Ostervald. This is hardly justifiable on the ground of inspiration. If *ὅτι* belong to the word of God, it has some meaning, and should not be entirely left out. Many, connecting the 19th and 20th verses closely together, make the *ὅτι*, and what follows it, the object of the assurance, and translate thus : "And we shall assure our hearts before Him, that if our heart condemn us because God is greater than our heart, He also knows all things." Others, feeling the difficulty of translating the first *ὅτι* *that*, and the second *because* (in their present position a great grammatical difficulty), render both by *that* ; and make, therefore, the greatness of God the thing which they desired to be persuaded of, and translate, with Luther, "Und können unser Herz vor ihm stillen, dass, so uns unser Hertz verdammet, dass Gott grösser ist dem unser Hertz und erkennt alle Dinge:" that is, "And we can still our hearts before Him, that, if our heart condemn us, that God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." This, I humbly confess, is to me unintelligible. Besides, it is finical and trifling to say that God's being greater than their heart was what they wished to assure their hearts of before Him. De Wette, on the other hand, punctuates as we do, and translates both *ὅτι*'s

*because*, thus : “ Den wenn uns das Hertz anklaget, weil Gott grösser ist denn unser Hertz, so kennet er auch alles ;” viz. “ Because, if our heart accuse us because God is greater than our heart, so He also knoweth all.” This would seem to make God’s knowing all things not the cause of his condemning us more than our hearts do, but the reason why He spares us. He knows all our weaknesses, and his greater knowledge of our motives and infirmities will prevent Him from condemning or accusing us. De Sacy brings out this meaning more fully : “ Que si notre cœur nous condamne, que ne fera point Dieu qui est plus grand que notre cœur, et qui connoit toutes choses ?”—“What if our hearts condemn us, which God will not do, who is greater than our heart, and who knoweth all things ?” This, however, is a free translation, and there is no possibility of making the verse an interrogative. Others, perplexed above measure with the second  $\sigma\tau\iota$ , would either strike it out, or change it into  $\epsilon\tau\iota$ , and read, “ God is yet greater than our heart ;” while a goodly number of translators and interpreters take refuge in a supposed Hebraicism, and, by comparing  $\sigma\tau\iota$  with  $\text{כִּי}$ , assert that it must be translated *certainly* or *surely* ; this is done by Beza, Martin, Macknight, and Dr. Whitby. The latter builds upon the usage of the word, in Gen. lxiii. 10. Ex. iii. 11. Numb. xxii. 23. Jud. vi. 16. 1 Kings i. 13. Jos. ii. 24. Ps. lxxvii. 12 cxii. 6. Macknight does refer to the Hebrew, but builds on the usage of the New Testament in 1 John iii. 20 (our text). Matt. vii. 23. John vii. 12. Rom iii. 8. 1 Cor. xiv. 21. 1 John iv. 20. These passages do justify the proposed rendering of  $\sigma\tau\iota$  in certain cases, and the authorities for so translating it here are highly respectable ; yet I would venture to make the following observations on it : 1st. All these passages seem to be, in many respects, different from our text, and most of them may be rendered by *that* or *because*, as well, and perhaps better, than by *certainly*. 2dly. The second  $\sigma\tau\iota$  seems to be a repetition of the former, and as such the sharp eye of Fritsche takes it. Yet



it strikes me that the two  $\sigma\tau\iota$ 's are too near each other for this principle of repetition. There are only five words between them, so that a repetition can hardly be thought of, as in long involved sentences, where the speaker or writer, for the sake of perspicuity, resumes or repeats a former part of the sentence. In such cases the  $\sigma\tau\iota$  should be rendered, like the Latin *inquam*, "because I say," precisely as Fritsche renders it in our passage. What, then, is the meaning of the passage? I translate  $\sigma\tau\iota$ , in both cases, *because* or *for*, and supply the ellipsis thus: "For if our heart condemn us (*much more will God condemn us*), for God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things." If we condemn ourselves, and feel that we are guilty and lost before God, how must we appear in the sight of the holy, all-knowing, heart-searching God? This view of the text is confirmed by the 21st verse, "Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence towards God." ἔχειν παρρησίαν, is to have *boldness* (John vii. 13, 26. viii. 32. John x. 24. xi. 14. xvi. 25, 29) to approach the throne of the heavenly grace in every time of need; to have joyful confidence in God, and firm assurance of our being his children; so that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

XI. *Prayer.* The apostle naturally passes from the confidence which the believer has in God and his gracious promises to the blessings and effects of prayer. We have such confidence in our heavenly Father's care and love, and He has such confidence that we will not abuse our liberties and privileges, "that whatsoever we ask we receive of Him." He gives us, so to speak, a *carte blanche*, which we are to fill up according to the roughness of the way, the darkness of the night, the treachery of false friends, or the hostility of public enemies. It is realizing in the believer the prayer of the

apostle, "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. iv. 19). The renewed soul seeks to be so united to God in the person of Jesus Christ the Redeemer, that all our thoughts, words, and actions may be controlled and directed by the holy love of God; and it is in the confidence that the bent of our affections, the course of our will, and, indeed, the whole soul, in all its faculties and desires, longeth only after the holy mind and will of God, that these words can be applied to any of the children of men—"Whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." Our sympathies are so attuned by divine grace that we have no desire to ask for any thing that is not according to his will. The lofty imaginations have all fallen at the foot of the cross, and the whole soul and will submerged in the holy, all-directing will of God. The Father and the prodigal have met, and the wilderness and all former faults are forgotten and forgiven in the paternal embrace; so that the lost one has now no thought or desire any more, save to love and obey his Father, who returns this confidence by saying, "All that I have is thine: ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you." The reason given in our text touches us very closely, and should lead us to examine and prove ourselves not a little. "We keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight." Are we, then, pure? is our service of such angelic purity, that our holy God and Redeemer can delight in it? Oh, not so indeed; but the dear name of Jesus, in whom, and for whom, we do all service, sanctifies the gift, and makes it pleasing to God. He is the Altar on which we offer ourselves and all that we have to God, and through the Altar the gift is sanctified. It is, however, a glorious thought, that, in Jesus Christ, our whole walk, life, and conversation are well-pleasing to God. He hears our prayers, and we walk in the light of his countenance as dear children. Oh may we ever remember these high privileges! May sin never darken the calm sunshine of our

joy in God! Hearing us from his throne on high, whatsoever we ask of Him, we have a double motive to do only those things that are pleasing in his sight. Help us, great God, to realize all this, and shew ourselves worthy children of thy grace, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

XII. ἡ ἐντολὴ αὐτοῦ, *his commandment*, it appears from the 23d verse, is twofold—faith and love; faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, his Son, and love to all the brethren.

1st. This is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Here πιστεύω is used with a dative (see Acts xxvii. 25). We have in Greek, as in English, various forms, without altering the meaning in any considerable degree. We have πιστεύειν ἐν, like פֶּאֱמִין (Mark i. 15; compare Jer. xii. 6), to believe in; so, to believe upon, ἔπι (1 Tim. i. 16. Matt. xxvii. 42. Rom. ix. 33. 1 Pet. ii. 6); so, to believe on (εἰς) the name of Jesus; viz. to rest and trust confidently on Him and his finished work for salvation (see Matt. xviii. 6. Mark ix. 42. John ii. 11. iii. 15, 16. iv. 39. vi. 35. vii. 5, 38. viii. 30). This is the most common form, and it shews out the perfect confidence of the soul in resting on the Lord Jesus for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel. It is the command of God, then, that we should believe on his Son, and He has given the just and proper evidence on which our faith can rest, in that He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places. This faith is not the simple assent of the mind to certain dogmas of the Gospel, but a holy resting on the living person of Christ as our Friend, Mediator, and Redeemer. You may believe a great deal *about* Christ, and yet not believe *on* Him, even as we may know a great deal about a person without knowing *himself*. He *commands* us to believe, and yet he tells us that faith is his own *gift*, for he requires the willing, reasonable service of our minds. This principle is the mightiest known to man, or revealed in the Bible, inasmuch as it is the organ which connects the

near with the most distant, the visible with the invisible, and the fallen material creation with the spiritual eternal God. It unites the weak with the strong, the tempted suffering members with the victorious conqueror at the right hand of God, and gives us the victory over the world, the devil, and the flesh. It is the first principle of our religion; for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is the rewarder of all them that diligently seek Him. Hence it is written, "without faith it is impossible to please God." This faith is of various degrees, weak or strong, staggering or triumphant, according to our faithfulness to the word and the promises of God. May we therefore obey the divine command, and believe with all our heart on the Lord Jesus Christ, that we may be saved! This is the will of God, and it is at the same time our own supreme good; so that we are inexcusable if we neglect the great salvation. May we say with sincerity, "Lord, we believe: help thou our unbelief!"

2dly. The second part of the command is, "And to love one another, as He gave us commandment." Brotherly love is repeated and enforced by the command of God. This is the delightful theme on which the apostle of love, who leaned on the bosom of the Saviour, delights to dwell. He is full of overflowing love to the adorable Redeemer and Head of the church, and the second all-mastering affection of his heart is love to the brethren. God and man, the Redeemer and the redeemed, are the two all-absorbing subjects towards which the sympathy of his loving heart flows forth in a thousand streams. Faith and love—faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, and love to one another—are the two parts of the commandment of the everlasting God, binding upon all nations, but more especially upon all believers, to the end of time. These are the two main currents in the ocean of divine grace; and in proportion as they are strong, deep, and clear, is the life of God in the church full and triumphant. When *faith* on the Lord Jesus Christ is strong and active, we have the first principle of a zealous Mis-



sionary church ; and where brotherly love is in full exercise, we have the greatest earthly guarantee for the unity of the church ; so that, in obeying this commandment of our God, we are entering into the very life and spirit of the apostolic age. Seek, then, to make love to the brethren the active principle of your life, that you may find them out, and have fellowship with them ; that you may have an opportunity for strengthening the weak, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are in prison, and thus fulfil the law of Christ (Matt. xxv. 35—46). These cups of cold water will not be in vain. But who are my brethren ? “All that are in the Romish church, out of which there is no salvation, are my brethren,” says the papist, “and these I am to love, and cherish, and bless, as the members of the body of Jesus Christ ;” never dreaming that the papacy is the Babylon of the Bible, and destined to utter destruction at the coming of the Lord. “All are my brethren that enjoy prelatical ordinances,” says the bigoted, heady high churchman, “and the rest of the so-called Christian communities are no better than the revolted ten tribes, and Samaria, their apostate capital.” “All are my brethren,” says the Christian, “who follow the Lord Jesus Christ, and love Him in truth and sincerity, wherever they are found. They are redeemed by his blood ; they are walking in his steps ; they are animated by the hopes of the Gospel promises ; and these I take to be my brethren, and upon them my affections shall be placed : their God shall be my God, and with them I hope to spend a never-ending eternity in the sanctuary above.”

XIII. *Communion ; the Spirit.* The twenty-fourth verse unites in a remarkable manner the principles of doctrine and duty, faith and practice, inasmuch as it teaches that a holy life in keeping the commandments of God is the evidence of our mystical union with God in the person of Jesus, the Mediator and Redeemer. The commandments here mentioned refer, no doubt, specially to the two great commandments of the twenty-third verse, *faith* and *love*, which seem to be taken by the apostle as

a summary of the Christian religion. In the keeping of these, says the apostle, we dwell in God, and God in us. For this indwelling of God in the believing soul consult the following Scriptures: John xvii. 21—24. vi. 56. 1 John iv. 15, 16. The language of these and similar passages is undoubtedly figurative, and it becomes us reverently to inquire how the great Jehovah, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, may be said to dwell in the hearts of his people: and here we are, in the first place, to abjure all pantheistic feelings and sympathies, as if God were merely a name, or a feeling, or the mere consciousness of good and evil in our hearts, or what is called the all-pervading spirit of nature and the universe. God is a personal God, the Creator, Governor, and Redeemer of the world, and the created worlds are not the necessary developement of the eternal All (τὸ πᾶν), but the free and beautiful work of his hands. Neither does this indwelling mean the omnipresence of the Deity as the ever-present, all-filling God; for in that case it would be a necessity for all, and not a privilege for the children of God. What, then, is the meaning of all the passages that speak of our being *in God, in Christ*, of our dwelling in Him, and He in us?

1st. They teach, that in the *act of believing* on the Son of God we are taken into union with God by the operation of the Holy Spirit, so that our will is brought into unison with his, and our whole life consecrated to his service. We are members of his spiritual family, stones in his living temple, and branches of the vine. He stands to us no longer in the relation of a Creator and Lawgiver merely, but also in that of a loving Father, to whom we have access at all times, and from whom all our gifts and mercies flow.

2dly. They teach that we have received *his gifts* in the person of the Redeemer, so that his love, grace, and mercy have purified our hearts, and consecrated them to his service. In receiving his blessings we receive himself, and in receiving himself we receive all his gifts and blessings. He dwells where

his love dwells, or, as our text asserts, where his children keep his commandments. His presence is shed abroad in our souls in the blessed fruits of love, joy, peace, and all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit. One necessary consequence of this indwelling of God is a keen sense of the evil of sin in his sight—a burning desire and longing after the beauty of holiness, that, in body, soul, and spirit, we may be conformed to the image of his Son. When we see a family seeking diligently to keep the commandments of the Lord, in the arrangements of the household, in the training up of the children in the fear of God, in the sanctification of the Sabbath, and in all the sacred observances of personal religion, there we may say *God dwells*: that house is a Bethel and a gate to heaven. The apostle adds, “And hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.” The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, shedding abroad in our souls the peace of Jesus and the fruits of righteousness, is the evidence of our Father’s presence and love. He is the gift of God to the church, and in receiving Him to quicken and comfort us we have the best and fullest evidence of Jehovah’s indwelling in our hearts. The Holy Spirit’s presence and work in the church of God during the absence of the Redeemer is the proof to the world that there is a holy God in heaven who loveth righteousness, and to the believer that his heavenly Father is ever near, in all the fulness and efficacy of his grace and love. Cry, then, for this spirit of adoption, that the presence of the Father may be more manifested in the hearts and lives of his children. Ask, seek, knock, that the God of all grace may pour out upon us the spirit of grace and supplication, and that the whole church of the Redeemer, filled and overflowing with the divine presence, may go forth on her heavenly mission, to conquer souls for the Saviour, fair as the sun, clear as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.

“Heavenly, all-inspiring Dove,  
Fill us with thy tender love;  
Love, the sealing grace impart;  
Dwell in every humble heart.

Thou canst make our quarrels cease,  
Thou canst fill our souls with peace :  
Shed thy mighty power abroad,  
Make us one with Christ and God."

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" O, love divine, how sweet thou art,  
How holy, calm, and free !  
How tranquil rests the human heart  
When filled and ruled by thee !

Thy presence makes the darkness light,  
Fills every heart with joy ;  
Makes all within serene and bright,  
No care can then annoy."



## CHAPTER X.

Ἀγαπητοὶ, μὴ παντὶ πνεύματι πιστεύετε, ἀλλὰ δοκιμάζετε τὰ πνεύματα, εἰ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶν· ὅτι πολλοὶ ψευδοπροφῆται ἐξεληλύθασιν εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκετε τὸ Πνεῦμα τοῦ Θεοῦ· πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ.

Καὶ πᾶν πνεῦμα ὃ μὴ ὁμολογεῖ τὸν Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ οὐκ ἐστὶ· καὶ τοῦτό ἐστι τὸ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου, ὃ ἀκηκόατε ὅτι ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἐστὶν ἡδῆ.

Ἑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστε, τέκνια, καὶ νενικήκατε αὐτούς· ὅτι μείζων ἐστὶν ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν ἢ ὁ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.

Αὐτοὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου εἰσὶ· διὰ τοῦτο ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου λαλοῦσι, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτῶν ἀκούει.

Ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐσμέν· ὃ γινώσκων τὸν Θεὸν, ἀκούει ἡμῶν· ὃς οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐκ ἀκούει ἡμῶν. Ἐκ τούτου γινώσκουμεν τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας καὶ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς πλάνης.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Hereby know ye the Spirit of God : Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God.

And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God : and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come ; and even now already is it in the world.

Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them : because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

They are of the world : therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

We are of God : he that knoweth God heareth us ; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

Ἀγαπητοὶ, ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὅτι ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐστὶ, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται, καὶ γινώσκει τὸν Θεόν.

Ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν, οὐκ ἔγνω τὸν Θεόν, ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν.

Ἐν τούτῳ ἐφανερώθη ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ ἀπέσταλκεν ὁ Θεὸς εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι' αὐτοῦ.

Ἐν τούτῳ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη, οὐχ ὅτι ἡμεῖς ἠγαπήσαμεν τὸν Θεόν, ἀλλ' ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἀπέστειλε τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἵλασμόν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν.

Ἀγαπητοὶ, εἰ οὕτως ὁ Θεὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς, καὶ ἡμεῖς ὀφείλομεν ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν. Θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται.

Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

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 ATONEMENT, ITS NAMES AND NATURE; 7. AN ADDI-  
 TIONAL WORD ON BROTHERLY LOVE; A HYMN.

IN the third chapter we have expatiated over a wide and varied field, where many lovely fruits of righteousness are found, but the richest, the fullest, and the ripest, is *love*. This, indeed, seems to be the natural air and element in which the beloved disciple seeks to dwell, and every other subject seems to be interesting to his loving mind only in so far as it bears upon this absorbing theme. The primæval fountain from which all covenants of grace, and promises of mercy, and hopes for a sinful creation flow, is the unoriginated love of God. This is the centre of the system of apostolic theology, and from it, as so many radii, all other doctrines and duties proceed over the infinite domain of sin, grace, and glory. Brotherly affection in the church, separation from the world, the great change from death unto life, the willingness to lay down our life for the brethren, the atonement of the cross, and the advent in glory, all, all are but variations and developements of the glorious sentence "*God is love.*" Our present chapter contains the same theme, but under a still different form, at least in the first part of it. The substance of the first, second, and third verses may be called—

#### I. FALSE PROPHETS; THE TEST OF THE SPIRITS (πνεύματα).

This is another proof of his love for the little children, to whom he writes that he would warn them against the delusions of false teachers and seducing spirits. He would have them rooted and grounded in Christ, so that all the trials of the world, and the flesh, and the devil, should not move them; growing up to Him who is the head of all things, ever the

deeper, ever the stronger and steadier, the longer they are united to Him, and the more violent the storms that beat upon them. Let us attend to these two verses in their order.

1st. ἀγαπητός, *Beloved*, is applied to the Lord Jesus Christ in the sense of *only*, or *only-begotten*, like יָחִיד (Gen. xxii. 2, 12), and, in that sense, it is his peculiar title: thus He is called ὁ Υἱὸς ὁ ἀγαπητός, “the beloved Son of God the Father, in whom He is well pleased” (Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 6), to shew out the relations that exist between the Father and the Son. He is often called, by way of eminence, ὁ ἀγαπητός, “the Beloved” (Mark iii. 17, &c.), in order to shew the supreme and eternal complacency which the Father had in Him, and to distinguish his sovereign delight in Him, from his love to all created beings. Add to this, that He is called the *one Son of God* (ἓνα Υἱὸν ἔχων, (Mark xii. 6), and the “only-begotten Son,” μονογενῆς (John i. 14, 18. iii. 16, 18. 1 John iv. 9), and you have the various phases of this glorious sonship. He is *the Beloved*, because He is the object of the supreme complacency of the Father; He is the *one Son of God*, to separate Him in every possible way from the figurative or adopted children of God by grace; and He is the *only-Begotten*, because his eternal generation is a single, glorious, incomparable fact, to which there is nothing similar in the universe. Nevertheless, these various views of the person of Christ are not mere speculation, but connected closely with the children of God in many ways. He is *the Beloved*, and in Him, as such, we share the Father’s love in our measure; He is the *one Son of God* by *nature*, and men are through Him made the children of God by *grace*; while his eternal generation as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, is the basis of our regeneration by the power of the Holy Ghost. Hence it is natural that the children of God, who are chosen, redeemed, and planted in the beloved Son, should be also called beloved sons (Acts xv. 25. Rom. xii. 19. 2 Cor. vii. 1. xii. 19. Col. i. 7. iv. 14. 1 Thess. ii. 8. Heb. vi. 9. 1 Pet. ii. 11. iv. 12. 2 Pet. iii. 1, 8, 14, 15, 17. 1 John iii. 2, 21). This shews



their relation to God, and they are often called beloved brethren (ἀδελφοὶ ἀγαπητοὶ) to shew out their relations to one another (Eph. vi. 21. Phil. iv. 1. Col. iv. 7, 9. Philemon i. 2, 16. Jas. i. 16, 19. ii. 5). In our passage the meaning of ἀγαπητοὶ is clear and beautiful. The great world lies in the wicked one, without care for the present or the future. Ye have left the world, and cast in your lot with the Redeemer, and, as holy, redeemed children, ye are the peculiar objects of Jehovah's care—*ye are beloved*. His grace and love have led you to the cross, where the streams of divine mercy flow which can unite all believers into one. I, the apostle, love you also, because ye love Him and one another, so that I also can call you my beloved children in the Lord. Ye are beloved of God, of Christ the Redeemer, and of one another.

2dly. *Believe not every spirit.* These spirits (πνεύματα) are referred to (1 Cor. xiv. 32) as the spirits of the prophets, which are subject to the prophets. The Holy Spirit's operations in the mighty signs and wonders are called πνεύματα, *spirits*, in reference to his speaking through the personal organs of men, though, in reality, it is the one Comforter and Quickener who speaks in them all. His operations and offices are very various in different persons, times, and places, and this may also have occasioned the use of the plural number in one or two instances (1 Cor. xii. 10. 2 Thess. ii. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 1). The Holy Ghost is also called "the seven spirits of God," ἑπτὰ πνευμάτα (Rev. i. 4. iii. 1. iv. 5. v. 6). Now the apostle assures us that we are not to give an unreasoning blind assent even to the testimonies of the Spirit of God, but, as responsible spiritual men, we must be able to determine and give a reason in every case whether the speaker be the Holy Spirit of God or a false and lying spirit. In this spiritual region you are not out of your senses, the reason is not unhinged, nor the human faculties overthrown. Ye are still responsible, and, even in the highest attainments of the divine life you are not exempt from the liability of error and deception. Even when speaking

by the Spirit of God (1 Cor. xii. 3) it did not remove their reasonable responsibility, for the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. It is manifest, from the command not to believe every spirit, but to prove the spirits, that the kingdom of sin reaches into the invisible world, where there are fallen wicked spirits, bent, like their king and master, the devil, upon the destruction of the human race.

3dly. Hence it is necessary to give a glance at the Scripture doctrine of *evil spirits* by whom the false prophets are deluded and possessed. These spirits are no other than the angels who kept not their first estate (Jude ver. 6), but, having sinned against God, were cast down into Tartarus, to await the judgment of the day of Christ (2 Pet. ii. 4). The chief, or leader of these infernal hosts is called Satan (שָׂטָן, "the adversary") or ὁ διάβολος, "the devil," or "the tempter," ὁ πειράζων (Matt. iv. 1—11. xiii. 19. xxii. 3. 1 Cor. vii. 5). He is also "the destroyer," Ἀβανδών (Rev. ix. 11). See also his other appellations (Matt. x. 25, 27. xii. 24. 2 Cor. vi. 15). All these names unite to give us the terrible conception of a great malignant fallen spirit, the primæval enemy of God and man, the first mover of evil in the universe, the liar from the beginning, by whom our world has been seduced from its allegiance to God. His servants in the other world, the victims of his apostacy, are called ἄγγελοι τοῦ διαβόλου, "the messengers or angels of the devil" (Matt. xxv. 41. Rev. xii. 12. vii. 9. ix. 14). They are called unclean spirits (πνεύματα ἀκάθαρτα), because they lead men into uncleanness of body and mind (Matt. x. 1. Mark. i. 27. iii. 11. v. 13. Acts v. 16. viii. 7. Rev. x. 13). They are called, also, "*wicked spirits*," πονηρὰ (Eph. vi. 12), because their aim is to extend the dominion of sin and death over the world. They are also very often called demons (δαιμόνια), and this name is commonly used in connection with the possessions mentioned in the New Testament. Their attributes are such as *lying, wicked, unclean, seducing*, &c., so that we may gather from these hints a clear idea of their character. This is the satanic kingdom so often

mentioned in Scripture, under various names, in which we are born, and to deliver us from which the Lord Jesus was appointed Mediator and Redeemer. From this infernal kingdom proceed the spirits of the false prophets which have gone abroad into the world to deceive the nations and seduce mankind from their allegiance to the Son of God. The *ὅτι* of the first verse connects, in the mind of the apostle John, all false prophets and delusive doctrines with these wicked spirits : you are to try the spirits whether they be of God, *because* many false prophets are gone out into the world.

4thly. The fundamental idea involved in the (*προφήτης*, or נָבִי, ) word prophet, in the Scriptures, is that of *divine influence*, which may be exercised in a great variety of ways, such as foretelling the future, speaking the word of God in the power of the Holy Ghost, warning the apostate nations, like Jonah and Jeremiah, or bearing the messages of God to a sinful world (Matt. x. 41. xiii. 57. Mark vi. 4. Luke iv. 24. xiii. 33. John vii. 52. Rev. xi. 10. xvi. 6. xviii. 20, 24. Matt. xi. 9. xiv. 5. Mark xi. 32. Luke i. 75, 76. xx. 6). This is the idea of a prophet in the Bible, at least in the great majority of cases, and hence we may easily discover what the *false prophets* mentioned in our text must be. They are false teachers of religion, pretenders, and hypocrites, who, in the name of the Son of God, propagate their delusions and doctrines of devils. Such abounded in the first ages of the church, and they abound at the present time: They corrupt the religion of the Bible by the traditions of men, and pretend that they are the only true prophets of the gospel, whom all men are bound, under pain of damnation, to hear. They claim the spirit of prophecy and the power of working miracles ; so that, if possible, they will deceive the very elect. They are very zealous, and have gone out into the world to spread their false doctrines of devils and abominable idolatries to the ends of the earth ; so that their zeal is apparently apostolic, while their corruptions, delusions, and manifold false doctrines are from the evil one. They shall sur-



round themselves with miracle and mystery, high-sounding names and popular attractions, to lead away the faithful from the simplicity of Christ. Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses with their enchantments (2 Tim. iii. 8); Pashur, the son of Immer, opposed Jeremiah, and smote him upon the face (Jer. xxi. 10); the false prophets and traditionists opposed, and finally crucified, the Lord of glory in the days of his flesh; and, at the present time, where can you direct your steps without meeting swarms of false prophets and corrupt teachers, who glory in the worship of man and woman, angels and images, wafers of wheat, and relics of dead men—any thing and every thing save the pure and ennobling worship of the one God, through the one Mediator, Jesus Christ the righteous?

5thly. The *test of the Spirit* is now given in these words, "Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God." Here the first point to be determined is the meaning of the phrase ἐρχεσθαι ἐν σαρκί, *to come in the flesh*, and this can only be done by attending to the usages of the Scripture phraseology. Observe, then, that the word *flesh* (σὰρξ), like בָּשָׂר, signifies the *human nature* in its mortal suffering condition (Matt. xix. 5, 6. Mark. x. 8. 1 Cor. vi. 16. Eph. v. 31. Matt. xxiv. 22. Mark xiii. 20. Rom. iii. 20. Gal. ii. 16). In these passages the word *flesh* is *identical* with the two words *flesh* and *blood* where they denote the suffering fallen humanity (Matt. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. xv. 50. Gal. i. 16. Eph. vi. 12. Heb. ii. 14); the same, in fact, as the phrase *soul and body*, or the fuller form, "body, soul, and spirit" (1 Thess. v. 23), for they all denote the full, complete *nature of man*, though in its mortal suffering condition. The first great truth, therefore, contained in the expression, "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," is, that He is truly and verily *man*, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh—the seed of the woman—the descendant of Abraham—the seed of David the king—the son of the holy Virgin Mary. He is a partaker of the "flesh and blood," σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα (Heb. ii. 14)



of the children, so that He can be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. Flesh, matter, is not essentially sinful, as the Gnostics asserted; nor is the body of Christ a mere phantasm, as the Docetæ asserted; nor is it a supercelestial body, prepared in heaven, and totally different from ours, as others asserted; nor is it a new *created* substance, as Dr. A. Clarke surmises; but a real human body, in every respect such as we have, but without sin. This is a great point of doctrine at all times, and was especially necessary in the apostolic ages, when the church's great controversy was with the decriers of the humanity of Christ. But, secondly, the expression, "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," proves more than that He is really man. It proves that He was something else, and, out of love to us, *became* man. He might have come ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ (Phil. ii. 6), "in the splendour and majesty of God;" but He chose to come ἐν μορφῇ δούλου "in the form of a servant," and the likeness of our human nature (Phil. ii. 7). He might have remained in his τὸ εἶναι ἴσα Θεῷ (Phil. ii. 6) "state of equality with God," but his infinite compassion for the sons of men, fallen and lost as we are, induced Him to assume the form and likeness of man. This is the mighty act of self-incarnating love on which the apostle John dwells with such rapture in his gospel and epistles. He begins his gospel with it, in the clear and distinct assertion, ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John i. 14). He begins his epistle with it, as we have seen, in (i. 2) his asserting that Jesus Christ is the eternal life of our souls, and that this life has been manifested unto us; and throughout all his writings this glorious theme occupies a conspicuous place. This is the truth which Paul asserts, in another form, but equally clearly (1 Tim. iii. 16), Θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, "God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on

in the world, received up into glory." Sometimes the expression is varied into *κατὰ σάρκα*, *according to the flesh*, as when it is asserted, that, according to his human nature, Jesus Christ was descended from the Jewish Fathers, while yet, according to his divine nature, he was the supreme God (Rom. ix. 5; see Rom. i. 3). Every conceivable form of expression is used in Scripture that could work into the mind of the reader the glorious truths of the incarnation and humanity of the Son of God.

6thly. These various ways of viewing the same truth are important, and we shall now consider a few of them, that we may gather as much as possible of the mind of God concerning this mystery of incarnate love. He was *made flesh* (John i. 14); He *took flesh and blood*, the same which the children had (Heb. ii. 14); He assumed the form of a servant and the likeness of man (Phil. ii. 5—10); He was a descendant of David according to the *flesh* (Rev. i. 3); He came from the Jewish race and nation as touching his *human nature* (Rev. ix. 5, 6); God sent his own Son in the likeness of *sinful flesh* (Rom. viii. 3), that by one offering for sin He might, in the human nature, *ἐν τῇ σαρκὶ*, condemn sin; He was manifested for us (1 John i. 2); He, God, was manifested in the *flesh* (1 Tim. iii. 16); the Father prepared Him a *body* (Heb. x. 5); this body He assumed willingly by his own spontaneous act (Heb. x. 7), and yet the act of uniting the two natures, the positive accomplishment of it, was by the operation of the Holy Ghost (Luke i. 35); He was the child *born*, and the son *given* by Jehovah, though He was, at the same time, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace (Ps. ix. 6, 7); He was born supernaturally of the Virgin Mary, without a human father; and thus, though manifested in the flesh, He was nevertheless pure and holy, the spotless, immaculate Lamb of God, that was to take away the sin of the world.

7thly. Now this is the doctrine which evil spirits and devils will never confess, because the very purpose for which He came in the flesh was to destroy the works of the devil (1 John

iii. 8. Gen. iii. 15. Luke x. 18. John xvi. 11. Heb. ii. 14). This act of inconceivable, almighty love shook the kingdom of darkness to its centre, and, in its effects and consequences, it is destined to deliver the creation from the dominion of sin, and bring more condign punishment upon the great enemy of our race. To confess the incarnate love of the Son of God, therefore, would be to pronounce their own doom, and acknowledge their merited condemnation. It is possible, however, that the words *ὁμολογεῖ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν ἐν σαρκὶ ἐληλυθότα* include more than the confession of the *fact* that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, though most of the commentators and interpreters translate as we do, and Dr. Lücke defends this translation, but only on historical, not on critical grounds. The more literal translation of the sentence is, “Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ come in the flesh, is of God, and every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ come in the flesh, is not of God.” According to this rendering, the spirit is to confess *Christ come in the flesh*, and not merely the *fact* that He is come in the flesh; and this translation I prefer and defend, because it is more literal and more general. Doddridge and Whitby translate thus: “Every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ *who is* come in the flesh, is not of God.” Ostervald renders literally as I do, “Tout esprit qui confesse Jésus-Christ venu en chair, est de Dieu;” and the clear-sighted, critical De Wette does the same, “Jeglicher Geist, der da Jesum Christum, als im Fleische erschienen, bekennet, der ist von Gott.” The test, then, to which the unclean and seducing spirits are to be brought is the character of Jesus Christ, as manifested in the flesh, as that which will detect all their subtleties and delusions. His glorious person, with all his works and offices, is the eternal standard of orthodoxy, truth, and holiness, for angels and for man. Every spirit who confesseth Jesus Christ as revealed in the flesh, is of God, for the work and office of the Holy Ghost is to bear witness to Christ. His entire character,\* in all its breadth and

depth, is presented to the mind of the church, and the believing soul receives it with adoring thankfulness and joy. The incarnation is a glorious truth, and so is the atonement, and the intercession, and the second advent; but these, and all other truths connected with salvation and the Saviour, are summed up and acknowledged when we "confess Jesus Christ come in the flesh." Devils can confess that He is the Holy One of God, who has the power to torment them (Matt. viii. 29), but they will never confess that He has come in the flesh to destroy their kingdom; that He has died for the sins of his people, to deliver them from satanic influence; that He intercedes for them at the right hand of the Father; and that He will come again in power and glory to bruise Satan under their feet. It is easier to confess a fact than confess a person. There are multitudes of men who will confess many of the glorious facts of redeeming love, but who are far indeed from being confessors of Jesus Christ come in the flesh.

8thly. The apostle John asserts that the spirit of the expected antichrist was already, even in the apostolic age, preparing the way for his coming. "And this is that *spirit* of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (verse 3). This is precisely what Paul asserts of the man of sin and son of perdition, saying, "The mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. ii. 7). The tares were sown shortly after the wheat; the principles of evil were at work in the primitive ages, and their full developement would introduce the antichrist, or man of sin. That the two apostles, in their descriptions of the evils of the last times, refer to the same system of iniquity, is manifest to the most cursory reader. (1) They both assert that the spirit of antichrist was at work, but that the antichrist was then still future (1 John ii. 18. iv. 3; compare 2 Thess. ii. 7). (2) They both assert that he is to be, not a professed public enemy of God and of Christ, but a false teacher of religion, surrounded by an apostate Christianity (2 Thess. ii. 3; compare 1 John



iv. 1, 2, 3). (3) Paul asserts that he shall sit in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God; and John calls him antichrist because he usurps the *place of Christ*, and seeks, in his name, to rule over the whole church or temple of God. (4) John makes the spirit of the false prophets and apostates prepare the way for him; and Paul asserts that he shall be surrounded "with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish" (1 John iv. 3; compare 2 Thess. ii. 9, 10). (5) John asserts that the antichrist, with all his system, will be opposed to the simple, honest confession of Jesus Christ as the incarnate Redeemer of his people; and Paul sees the expected man of sin and son of perdition surrounded with the mystery of iniquity and all kinds of strong diabolical delusions (1 John iv. 3; compare 2 Thess. ii. 11). (6) John asserts that the antichrist, though claiming the place and authority of Christ, will yet, in reality, deny both the Father and the Son; and Paul tells us, that, as the professed friend but real enemy of God and righteousness, Jesus Christ shall be revealed from heaven to destroy him (1 John ii. 22; compare 2 Thess. ii. 8). (7) John identifies the coming and reign of antichrist with the last time; and Paul teaches that "the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron, forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth" (1 John ii. 18; compare 1 Tim. iv. 1—4). These are the grounds on which I believe that the antichrist of John, and the apostacy described by Saint Paul, are one and the same; and it were easy, if necessary, to identify both of them with Babylon and the Beast of the Revelation.

## II. THE CONTRAST; THE TWO PARTIES, TRUTH AND ERROR.

This is the subject generally of the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses,

and the apostle is very naturally led to it from the subject of antichrist, which he had just been describing. The transition I take to be something like this: I have described the fearful delusions and false prophets which are preparing the way for the expected antichrist of the last time, and now I turn to you, beloved children of God, to tell you your privileges, and comfort you in these evil days.

1st. "*Ye are of God*, little children, and have overcome them, because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world." The first glorious truth asserted here is, that the believer is of God. This is the radical, fundamental principle on which we must ever take our stand when the enemy comes in like a flood, and temptations and troubles, doubts and perplexities, close round about us like the waves of the sea. This was the consolation of Israel when—

"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,  
And his cohorts were gleaming with purple and gold;  
And the sheen of his spears was like stars on the sea  
As the blue waves roll nightly on dark Galilee."

Then sang the ancient people of God, in the strong confidence of faith, "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea" (Ps. xlv. 1, 2). Nor was their confidence in vain,

"For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breathed in the face of the foe as he pass'd,  
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill  
And their hearts but once heaved, and for ever were still."

This was the consolation of Luther when the tempests were thickening around him, and the thunders of the Vatican rolling over his head. Then he composed his immortal song, which struck terror into his enemies, gave confidence to his friends,

and is the living, burning faith of the German nation at the present time.

“Ein’ feste Burg ist unser Gott,  
Ein’ gute Wehr und Waffen;  
Er hilft uns frei aus aller Noth  
Die uns jetzt hat betroffen,” &c.

This strong confidence of faith, expressed in the words “Ye are of God” it was which sustained our fathers in many a dark and cloudy day, when they contended manfully for the right to worship God according to the Scripture, against the Romish antichrist, and planted in tears and blood the tree of liberty, under which we are now enjoying such enlargement and repose. So it is with the individual soul also. We fall back upon the confidence that we are of God; that his love has conquered our stubbornness, his mercy pardoned our transgressions, and his promises filled us with humble but immortal hopes. “Ye are of God,” says the apostle, “his creatures, his children, his peculiar treasure, the trees of his planting, the branches of his vine, the stones in his temple, the vessels of his mercy, and the heirs of his heavenly glory. Be not afraid, little flock, it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

2dly. *The victory* is also yours, though the enemy may seem to prevail for a time or for ever, “because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world.” It is the glorious quality and privilege of the believer, that, in this warfare, he always conquers, for it is a controversy, not of external hosts and concussions of arms, but of the inner man, and the resolutions of the will, and the stedfastness of faith. In this warfare none are more victorious than those who seem most thoroughly defeated. The conquerors here are not found on triumphal cars, or in solemn processions of worldly glory, or in palaces and domains, the rewards of states and empires, but in the high places of the field of danger, in the afflictions and sorrows of the cross, and in the perils, persecutions, and deaths to which

the love of Christ exposes them. Here no foreign force, no external power, can conquer us while the will remains firm, for every trial brightens the evidence of our faith; every storm roots us deeper in the love of God; every additional contumely for the sake of Christ adds to our triumph and enhances our crown; so that, like our Master and forerunner, we conquer even in dying, and slay by being slain. "Ye have overcome them," says the apostle; and this is, and ought to be our language also, if we are the children of God. The seductions of the spirit of antichrist can attract us no more, for we have seen the King in his beauty, and the land that is far off. The world, with all its false hopes and joys, can attract us no longer, for the grace of God has opened up to us brighter prospects than this earth can give. We are conquerors through the grace of our God; and, as in the ancient times, we overcome them through the blood of the Lamb. The false prophets and seducing spirits attack us in vain, for Christ is our captain: we are clothed in the whole armour of God, and greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world. God never leaves his people in the time of trouble; but, as sorrows abound, so his consolations abound more and more also. The Holy Ghost, the Comforter, is the in-dwelling fountain of our joys; so that, strengthened and gladdened by Him, we can, like Stephen, joyfully endure, for Christ's sake, all possible sufferings, and, even in death, we are more than conquerors. This in-dwelling, mighty power of God in the soul of the believer is the consequence of the work of Jesus Christ, as our Head and Redeemer, and our only guarantee against apostacy, as well as the certain assurance of victory. Greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world. Observe the relations which exist between God and the believer, as expressed in the words *ἐν ὑμῖν, in you*. This was the promise of God from the beginning, that in consequence of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the divine presence, which, after the fall, left the garden, would be restored to us again, and in a higher and nobler form than



at the beginning. God walked *with* Adam in the happy garden, and this was the highest glory of the race of man as *creatures* of God. But God was *ἐν Χριστῷ*, "*in Christ*," reconciling the world to himself, not imputing unto men their trespasses; and out of this higher and closer relationship between Jehovah and the God-man arises our *redemption*, standing expressed in the remarkable words, "*God in us*, or *Christ in us*, the hope of glory." This indwelling of God the Holy Spirit in the hearts of men is one of the most important and frequently-taught doctrines of the New Testament (1 John ii. 27. iii. 9, 24. iv. 4, 13. John xiv. 16, 17. Ps. lxxviii. 18. Acts ii. 33. x. 45. Eph. iv. 8). These glorious pentecostal gifts of the Spirit are the endowments which the risen Head deemed necessary for his church during her pilgrimage, until He comes again to receive her to his glory. It is remarkable, also, that as, through this pentecostal advent of the Spirit, God is said to dwell in the believer, so also the believer is said to be, to dwell, to walk *in* God. There is a reciprocal union and communion between the saint and the Saviour (see 1 John iv. 15. Rom. viii. 9. 1 Cor. iii. 16. vi. 19). This is intended, no doubt, to shew us the nature of the union which, in the act of believing, is formed between the soul and God, and expresses, without a figure, the same truth which is contained in such relative names of the church as, "*the Temple*," "*the Vine*," "*the Habitation of God*," and "*the Body of Christ*." Let us never forget, as believers, this holy relationship to the holy God in which we stand, and which is our highest, noblest privilege on earth. He whom we love is near us, with us, *in us*. We dwell at all times in the circle of his love, and in the secret of his pavilion is our calm retreat; and his infinite condescension deigns to assure us that He will dwell in our hearts by faith. Oh, wondrous love! Oh, rich, free, boundless mercy of our loving Father in heaven, for which we have nothing to offer in return but the poor gift of doubting, diffident, half-loving hearts! The last clause of the verse,

and the nature of the contrast, shews that Satan is *in the world*, ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, which means that he possesses and rules over ungodly men in some such way as the Holy Ghost does in the temple of the believing church of God (John xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11. 1 Cor. ii. 12. Eph. ii. 2. vi. 12). These passages lead us to the fearful conclusion that the whole fallen world lies groaning under the dominion of a powerful, malignant spirit, from whose tyrannical dominion the cross of Christ and the work of the Holy Ghost alone can deliver us. His poisonous breath pervades the entire moral atmosphere which surrounds the human species, so that our whole human being, in its deepest fountains, is interpenetrated with the principles of sin and death. Regeneration is the gate out of this deadly domain of Satan, so that all unregenerated nature is death and devil-possessed, and, as such, must abide the consequences of the wrath of God (John iii. 36). As in the case of the believer and God, so also here, there is a reciprocal union, and the world is said to be, to dwell, or to lie in the wicked one (1 John v. 19. Gal. i. 4). The prodigal lies in the arms of the destroyer; the prodigal returned lies in the bosom of his father. The church and the world have different masters, and their principles and instincts are accomplished in quite different destinies. God rules in the life and conscience of all that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and Satan, the prince of the power of the air, is the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience (Eph. ii. 2). Thus we are led again, as always, to the two kings, and the two kingdoms into which the creation is divided, and with one or other of which we also, you who read and I who write, must have our portion.

3dly. The *worldly sympathy* mentioned in the 5th verse is natural, and such as may always be expected. These false prophets, coming in the spirit of antichrist, and to prepare the way for him, are said in our text to be ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου, *of the world*, which suggests the idea that antichrist is to be surrounded with great pomp and worldly splendour; and this is another proof

that the mighty system of worldliness and pride, called the papacy, is no other than the antichristian Babylon of the New Testament. They are of the world : their head is a prince, and wishes to be (like Satan, John xiv. 30) *the prince* of this world, so that all kings and emperors should do him homage : his cardinals, bishops, and manifold office-bearers, are worldly in the highest degree, so that in splendour, palaces, retinue, scarlet and purple robes, and rich dresses of all sorts, they surpass the princes and kings of the earth : their churches are worldly in the highest degree ; and the whole spirit that pervades the hierarchy, from the man of sin at Rome to the most menial servant in his kingdom, is that of wealth, aggrandisement, and worldly ambition. The apostle adds, "Therefore they speak of the world, and the world heareth them." Never was this sentence more verified in any false prophets and doctrines of devils since the world began, than in the rise, progress, and dominion of the Jesuits in the bosom of the papacy. They had their reward, in that the world heard them gladly, and the reason may be learned from "Pascal's Letters." It is not, indeed, to be expected that the system which, in reality, though not in profession, denies and nullifies the coming and work of the Son of God in the flesh, should be any thing save a huge fleshly kingdom, in which fornication and carnal ambition were to be dominant principles (Rev. xviii. 3).

4thly. The *apostolic authority* is fully and formally asserted in the words of the 6th verse, as well as the fact, that all that really love and fear God do submit to it. Ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, therefore, in this verse, does not mean belonging to God, nor begotten of God, but sent and commissioned from God to be the public teachers and apostles of mankind. As the false teachers are of *the world*, viz. proceeding from the antichristian and satanic spirit which rules over and guides the course of this world ; so we, the apostles, are from God, commissioned to manifest his will to men ; and all that know God hear us, and submit to our authority. Here, then, is the

supreme test among men, by which to manifest the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. *He that heareth the apostles is of God*, and he that knoweth not God heareth them not. Hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error. Who is the more likely to venerate the apostolic verities, those who seal up the word of God in dead languages, and forbid the people to read it, or those who publish it freely to all, and require us, like Timothy, to know it from our youth? John asserts here that the worldly antichristian spirit is utterly opposed to the apostolic word. This is another proof, added to the many already given, that the papacy, which cannot endure the word of God, and trembles at its circulation, is interpenetrated with the spirit of error, and neither knoweth nor loveth the pure and holy God. How is it possible to love God, and yet not love his holy word? This is indeed the master-principle of antichrist; because, wishing to usurp the place of Christ, he would set aside the word of God, by which alone his delusions and pretensions can be detected. He would surround his throne with clouds and darkness, and train up his subjects in ignorance and superstition, that his blasphemous pretensions may escape the scorn and indignation of mankind. He that knoweth God *hears the apostles*. This is the glorious standard of truth and righteousness among men, and by the word of God alone can the spirit of error be detected. If God, then, has delivered our souls from the domain of antichrist, where the apostles are not heard, and brought us into the enlargement and liberty of his own blessed word, how should our increasing knowledge of God deepen our delight daily more and more in the Holy Scriptures, and make us grow up to the perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ!

“Great God, with wonder and with praise,  
On all thy works I look;  
But still thy wisdom, power, and grace,  
Shine brightest in thy book.



Here are my choicest treasures hid ;  
 Here my best comfort lies ;  
 Here my desires are satisfied,  
 And here my hopes arise."

### III. ἡ ἀγάπη, " LOVE."

This subject is contained in the 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, and the 11th verses, in a great variety of forms, and to it we must now turn our attention. You would survey a beautiful building from various sides and angles, that you might gain the combined idea of the whole in all its varieties of architectural elegance: so the apostle John contemplates the theme of love from all points, and finds it ever new and beautiful; for, in all its manifoldness, it comes from God and returns to God.

1st. The apostle resumes the theme of *brotherly love*, saying, "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God." We have already seen, more than once, in this epistle, that the apostle seems to place the spirit of Christianity itself in the principle of brotherly love, making it the very evidence of our sonship; so that without it none can have any claim to the Christian character. Here the question necessarily arises, "Who are our brethren?" and two classes are ready to answer the question, but on very different principles. The class of rationalists, infidels, deists, and semi-deists, who have just got so much learning as makes it a dangerous thing, but not so much as to make them modest or diffident, assert, "All mankind are our brethren; the whole human race are the children of God; and Hindús, Moslems, Jews, and Christians, are but different compartments in the great fold of Christ." These men are believers in the *universal religion*, whatever that means, but they admit no special system as a revelation from God. In answer to this it is sufficient to say, that the apostle John never hints at such an idea, for he distinguishes the brethren, on all occasions, from *the world*; that if all mankind are brethren, the bond that unites them must be frail and inoperative; and finally,

that no people write and act more bitterly or more vindictively against others than these men themselves. Then another large class, as ignorant as they are presumptuous, assert, "The papists are my brethren, the pope is my father on earth, and all the rest of Christendom are doomed to the wrath of God, both in time and eternity." But it is not easy to believe that the *τέκνια*, *little children*, to whom the beloved disciple writes, are the popes, cardinals, nuncios, bishops, and scarlet-robed officers of the papal hierarchy. Others, nearly related to popery in practice and in feeling, but condemned and despised by it—such as the Puseyites in England, and the semi-papal episcopal sect in Scotland—answer the question by saying, "All who enjoy the blessing of episcopal, viz. prelatical, ordinances are the brethren referred to by the apostle: these we are to love, and all other reformed churches—such as the churches of France, Prussia, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Holland, Scotland, and America—are to be accounted as heathen men and publicans." This is a bold, blasphemous sentiment of the most presumptuous and unbrotherly kind, which can be entertained only by men whose moral sensibilities have been blunted or extinguished by sectarian bigotry and the love of power. Who, then, are the brethren? They are the holy and elect people of God throughout the whole world. Their names may be various, but their hearts are one. They have one Father in heaven whom they adore; one glorious, glorified Redeemer whom they love; one Quickener and Comforter, the Holy Ghost, by whom they are united to the Lord and to one another. These are all brethren, and we should love them all: their enemies, their friends, their hopes, and their fears, are all the same; they have left the same Egypt, they march through the same wilderness, and they all look forward to the same promised land. These are the little children, and the beloved brethren of the apostle John; and of them he says, "Beloved, let us love one another."

2dly. The reason which he gives is remarkable, "for love is

of God." Love is indeed the sure mark and token of the presence of God; and wherever anger, wrath, and contention prevail, we may be certain there is little of his presence there. When this fire is kindled in the heart by grace, the bands of our dwarfish sectarianism are soon dissolved, and the soul, emancipated and blessed, rejoices in the liberty with which Jesus makes us free. In our families, also, love is the sure token of a present God; and on the whole earth there is perhaps nothing so like the joys and tranquillity of heaven as a household where the principle of love reigns in every heart. Enter such a family, and you can read, in the life and conduct of every member of it, the meaning of the sentence, "Love is of God." Love was the principle of creation; for the blessed God was infinitely happy, and might have remained so without creating any thing. Love is the origin of the work of redemption; for God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life: and love, no doubt, shall be the principle and end of the judgment and reign of Christ, when the whole earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Love, in every form, from the spark like the smoking flax to the extacy of the seraph before the throne, is of God; and wherever we find it we may write "*Jehovah thamma,*" *the Lord is there.*

3dly. *πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν*, "and every one that loveth is born (begotten) of God." If it be so, that God hath created us anew in Jesus Christ, and thereby given us the principle of a new and eternal life, it is natural and necessary that, in the main features of our character, we should resemble Him. Hence love generally, and brotherly love in particular, is made the evidence of our sonship (1 John iii. 14. ii. 11). He that loveth is born of God. The new birth unto righteousness is the opening of a fountain of love in the stony heart. Hateful and hating one another is the characteristic of our natural condition, and regeneration is the implanting of the seeds of life and

love in our cold and unloving hearts. The first and surest evidence, therefore, that we are born of God, is love; and without this all our knowledge is as sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, and can never lead us to the true character of God. On the contrary, it puffeth up, and leads rather away from God than to Him.

4thly. Hence it is written (verse 8), "He that loveth not, knoweth not God," *ὅτι ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν*, "for God is love." The proposition is absolute and universal, and therefore *ἀγάπη* has no article. For this reason I believe Luther's translation, "Gott ist die Liebe," is inaccurate, and limits what God intended to be unlimited. De Wette translates more exactly, "Gott ist Liebe." So also the Hebrew translation, in the New Testament published by Bagster, *פִּי אֱלֹהִים הוּא הָאַהֲבָה* is false, inasmuch as *אֱלֹהִים* should have the article, and *אַהֲבָה* should not have it. The same principle holds good in the Arabic *لأن الله محبة*. If the apostle had wished to specify this love in any way, he would, no doubt, have used the definite form, *ἡ ἀγάπη*. The glorious assertion of our text, therefore, is, that Jehovah, the God of the Bible and the universe, *is love*—the living, overflowing fountain of love from which every thing good, and gracious, and loving in the creation flows. The two eternal monuments of his glory are the universe and the Bible: nature, and grace, and love, is the prevailing inscription on both. This sentence, "God is love," should be written on the hearts of all trembling, doubting sinners who feel terrified to approach the presence of the holy God, that they might draw comfort from the assurance of the glorious truth, and approach Him in Jesus Christ without distrust or fear. He is holy, He is righteous, He is merciful; and He is not only the loving, gracious God, but He is love itself. Look abroad over the beautiful creation, sin-stained and fallen though it be, and tell me, do not its cares, its various adaptations, and its rich treasures of all kinds for the use of men, all proclaim its Author to be love? The hidden



wisdom and power which are seen in every department of it, from the deepest geological strata up to the sanctuary of God in heaven, are one perpetual reiteration of the New-Testament assertion, "God is love." Who shall describe the fountain of benevolence, whose streams are in richest beneficence poured over the whole universe to satisfy the wants of every thing that lives? How wide is his kingdom, and how various are the wants and necessities of his creatures! Yet his hand supplies them all. He is love, and out of this eternal fountain of beneficence his wide creation is supplied. Then, again, if we cast our eye over the work of redemption, is not the glorious theme, in all its variety and extent, included in the assertion of the apostle, "God is love?" Is not this love of God the fountain from which all the promises of mercy and covenants of grace to the sinful creation flow? Look at the cross, where the Son of God expires for the sin of the world, and say, is it not indeed a great reality that "God is love?" He so loved *thee*! It is a fact, brother man, whosoever thou art that readest these words, that God is love; and that He loveth thee, and hath given his Son as the proof of this love.

5thly. For in the ninth verse the apostle refers to this very subject, saying, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." Here we observe that the proof of divine love is the sending of the Son of God into our world (John iii. 16. Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 9). This proves that the highest, noblest gift God had to bestow on a ruined race was his Son, for in giving Him the excellency of God's love is placed. He was not merely the messenger to announce to us the good gifts and intentions of God, but He himself was the *gift*. (1) The sender is God, who is, in the text, described as the fountain of divine love, and from this divine affection in the Godhead human redemption springs. (2) The *sent one* is ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, *the Son of God*. To understand this remarkable expression, we must take the following facts into consideration.

First, that the two phrases, *Son of God* and *Son of man*, stand opposed to and contrasted with one another in the Bible, and should therefore be interpreted upon the same principles; but Son of Abraham describes Him as of the Jewish race; Son of David, as the real heir of the throne and kingdom of David; Son of man, as really and truly man, possessed of our nature, and clothed with the attributes of manhood; so, by the same principle of interpretation, the phrase, *Son of God*, must define Him as really and truly God, possessed of the nature of the Father, and clothed with all the attributes of Deity. (3) Add to this, that the Son and the Father are often so compared and contrasted in the Scriptures as to preclude the idea of any thing but proper and natural sonship (Matt. xxviii. 19. Mark xiii. 32. John v. 36. 1 John i. 3. ii. 22. iv. 14. 2 John 3, 9). How would it shew the unutterable love of God that He should give an *angel*, or a *mere man*, to die for our sins? Such would be unlike God, and unworthy of the majesty of his grace; for, both in nature and in providence, He acts in a manner worthy of his nature and character. All those passages—and they are very numerous—which designate the Redeemer by this title, have force and significancy only on the ground of his real and proper sonship. (4) Bear in mind, still further, that He is the Son before He is sent, and not sent to become a son (John iii. 16. Ps. ii. 7. Heb. i. 8); so that the relation of sonship does not date from the incarnation, but refers back to the indefinite eternity of the past. (5) But we must not forget the remarkable epithet of our text, *μονογενής*, “only begotten,” which separates Him entirely and absolutely from all adopted and figurative sons. In our text, too, it is applied to Him in the most emphatic and definite manner, *τὸν Υἱὸν αὐτοῦ τὸν μονογενῆ*, “the Son of himself, the only begotten one” (compare John iii. 16. i. 14, 18). In the same emphatic way He is called *ὁ Υἱὸς ὁ ἀγαπητός*, “the beloved Son of God” (Matt. iii. 17. xvii. 5), which could never, without the utmost violence to the usages of language, be applied to a creature (see the following passages,

Rom. i. 3, 4, 9. v. 10. viii. 3, 29, 32. 1 Cor. i. 9. xv. 28. 2 Cor. i. 19. Gal. i. 16. ii. 20. Eph. iv. 13. Col. i. 13. 1 Thess. i. 10. Heb. i. 2. vi. 6. 2 Pet. i. 17. 1 John i. 7. v. 5. Rev. ii. 18, &c.). (6) The Jews understood this title as implying blasphemy against God; and because Jesus assumed it, they wished to stone Him to death, according to the law, as a blasphemer (John v. 18. x. 33—40). This shews the sense attached to the phrase *Son of God* in the apostolic age, even by the enemies of the Saviour; and reason, criticism, common sense, unite in giving it the same signification still. We see now how the Scriptures should dwell with such emphasis and extacy on the love of God in the gift of *his Son*, for the gift was infinite. He was the image of the invisible God, the first-born, or heir of every creation, in whom it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell. In Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily; and hence his coming, his life in our nature, and his death on the cross for the sins of the people, were of infinite value in the sight of God. Hence the glorious doctrine of the atonement is not only possible, but natural and necessary, when we consider the majesty and excellence of the incarnate Son of God. The stupendous act of incarnation is, in every respect, worthy of God, whose name and nature is love, and gives redemption in the kingdom of grace an importance corresponding to that of creation in the kingdom of nature. In the light of this love we see all things clearly. He is love, and the coming of his eternal Son is the manifestation of his love. Here the whole character of God is opened up to our adoring contemplation as the God of boundless mercy and forgiving love; here sin is delineated in its awful malignity as the violation of the law of supreme love; and here grace shines forth in its brightest radiance around the person of incarnate love. Life, eternal life, is put within our reach, and it is a gift of value and importance, for it was won for us by the incarnation of the only-begotten Son of God. Sin, death, and the wrath of God, must be terrible, for they are the consequences of the rejection of infinite love.

6thly. We pass on in this circle of love from the incarnation to the *atonement*, which naturally follows it, in the tenth verse—"Herein is love, not that we love God, but that He loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1) The first assertion of the apostle is necessary as the ground of the second, for he intends to shew us, that, in all our wickedness and sin, even while we were sinners and ungodly, God loved us, and manifested his grace in the incarnation and atonement of his Son. We did not *love Him*, says the apostle, and this negative includes the contrary affirmative—"We did hate Him" (see 1 John iii. 1, 17). Our state before God was sinful, and the characteristic which the apostle Paul gives of it, "Hateful, and hating one another." The clear doctrine contained in the phrase οὐκ ἠγαπήσαμεν τὸν Θεόν, "not that we loved God," is the innate depravity and corruption of the human race (Eph. ii. 1—3. iv. 18. Ps. ii. 5. Rom. v. 12). It is manifest, that not to love God is, in the mind of the apostle John, one of the greatest possible sins; yet it was while we were in this condition that God manifested his love to us by sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Ἰλασμοῦς, סְלִיחָה (Ps. cxxx. 4), is found only in our text and 1 John ii. 2; but the meaning of the word is perfectly clear, and has, indeed, never really been disputed. There are many similar expressions in the word of God, which mutually shed light upon one another, and upon the nature of the death of Christ. He is our Mediator and High Priest, whom God hath set forth to be ἱλαστήριον (Rom. iii. 25); which may mean either the *propitiator*, who makes the reconciliation, or the *mercy-seat* (Heb. ix. 5), the כַּפֶּרֶת of the Hebrews (Lev. xvi. 11), where Jehovah, from the throne of grace, dispenses his pardoning love to mankind. He is called the καταλλαγὴ κόσμου, "the reconciliation of the world," through the rejection of the Jews (Rom. xi. 15); and through Him the believer actually receives the reconciliation or atonement, καταλλαγὴ (Rom. v. 11). He is our λύτρον, or *ransom*, his precious blood being the price paid for



our deliverance (Matt. xx. 28. Mark x. 45; see אֲלֹהֵי, Lev. xxv. 24, 51, and כֹּפֶר, Ex. xxx. 12). This is the same idea which is contained in ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ παντῶν, “the redemption price for all” (1 Tim. ii. 6; compare Matt. xx. 28). This is the פְּדִיּוֹן (Num. iii. 49), or פְּדִין Ex. xxi. 30. Ps. xlix. 10), which, in Ps. xlix. 9, the Septuagint renders τὴν τιμὴν τῆς λυτρώσεως, the *price of the redemption*. He is our passover (τὸ πάσχα ἡμῶν) slain for us, to save us from the hand of the destroying angel (1 Cor. v. 7). He is called an offering and sacrifice (θυσία) offered for our sins to the justice of God (Eph. v. 2). He has purged our sins (Heb. i. 3. He has tasted death for every man (ὑπὲρ παντὸς, Heb. ii. 9). He offered himself without spot to God (Heb. ix. 14). His body was offered up once for all (Heb. x. 10). He sealed the covenant of grace with his blood (Heb. x. 29). We are elected to the sprinkling of his blood (1 Pet. i. 2). One office of the Spirit of God was to testify of the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. i. 11). We are redeemed with the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without spot and blemish (1 Pet. ii. 18). He bare our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Pet. ii. 24). He suffered once, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God (1 Pet. iii. 18). His blood cleanseth us from all sin (1 John i. 7). He laid down his life for us. He has washed us from our sins in his own blood (Rev. i. 5). He has redeemed us to God by his blood out of the nations (Rev. v. 9). The robes of the saints in glory have been washed and made white in his blood (Rev. vii. 14). We have the victory over our enemies only in his blood (Rev. xii. 18). All these speak the same language as our text, and present the dying love of Christ for sinful man in all possible varieties of form. Here is the best exposition of the sublime assertion of our apostle—“God loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.” Read this, dear brother, not to cavil or object, but to believe and live: for surely, if the Bible be indeed the word of God, this great truth of atoning love shines through

it like a thousand stars, and beckons thee, at every turn, to come to the blood of sprinkling and be reconciled. It is not for the want of life that ye die, but because ye will not have it. It is not owing to want of love in God that ye perish, but because ye reject it. Ye are self-condemned, if condemned at all, for the way to the Holiest has been opened, and the great atonement made.

“Tu rex gloriæ Christus,  
 Tu Patris sempiternus es Filius,  
 Tu ad liberandum suscepisti hominem,  
 Nec horruisti virginis uterum.

Tu devicto mortis aculeo  
 Aperuisti credentibus  
 Regna cœlorum.”

Oh wondrous tale of divine love ! The poor dwarfish heart of man can hardly believe that God is such a loving, blessed God, or that He has such oceans of grace and love for us. Help us, O God, to receive thy message of mercy in the gift of thy Son Jesus Christ. Make us wholly and for ever thine, O God, that we may daily love thee, and serve thee more and more, till we finally enter into thy glory above. Thou art the pure fountain of life and love, and to thee we owe all we have, are, and expect to be, and to thee alone be the glory !

7thly. We conclude with an additional word on *brotherly love* from the eleventh verse—“Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.” His argument and appeal is, We are loved, and therefore we should love: the arms of the Father are around us, and *therefore* we ought to love one another. The experience of his love to us awakens the consciousness of our duty to love one another. This we find practically true in our experience among mankind ; for where we find those who love God we are sure to find, in a similar proportion, love to the brethren. His love is first, and then, loving Him in return, we are conscious of the obligation to

love the brethren also. May we seek to remove every impediment to the exercise of this noble affection ; and, in our daily walk in life, may we recognise as our brethren and fellow-pilgrims all those, of every name and country, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth !

### GOD IS LOVE.

“ Come, ye that know and fear the Lord,  
And raise your thoughts above :  
Let every heart and voice accord  
To sing that ‘ God is love.’

This precious truth his word declares,  
And all his mercies prove :  
Jesus, the gift of gifts, appears,  
To shew that ‘ God is love.’

Behold his patience, bearing long  
With those who from Him rove ;  
Till mighty grace their heart subdues  
To teach them ‘ God is love.’

The work begun is carried on  
By power from heaven above ;  
And every step, from first to last,  
Declares that ‘ God is love.’

Oh may we all, while here below,  
This best of blessings prove ;  
Till warmer hearts, in brighter worlds,  
Proclaim that ‘ God is love ! ’ ”

## CHAPTER XI.

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Ἐὰν ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει, καὶ ἡ ἀγάπη αὐτοῦ τετελειωμένη ἐστὶν ἐν ἡμῖν.

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ μένομεν, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἡμῖν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν.

Καὶ ἡμεῖς τεθεάμεθα, καὶ μαρτυροῦμεν ὅτι ὁ πατὴρ ἀπέσταλκε τὸν υἱὸν σωτῆρα τοῦ κόσμου.

Ὁς ἂν ὁμολογήσῃ ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ μένει, καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ Θεῷ.

Καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐγνώκαμεν καὶ πεπιστεύκαμεν τὴν ἀγάπην ἣν ἔχει ὁ Θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν. Ὁ Θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστὶ· καὶ ὁ μένων ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, ἐν τῷ Θεῷ μένει, καὶ ὁ Θεὸς ἐν αὐτῷ.

Ἐν τούτῳ τετελείωται ἡ ἀγάπη μεθ' ἡμῶν, ἵνα παρρησίαν ἔχωμεν ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῆς κρίσεως· ὅτι καθὼς ἐκεῖνός ἐστι, καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ.

Φόβος οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ, ἀλλ' ἡ τελεία ἀγάπη ἔξω βάλλει τὸν φόβον· ὅτι ὁ φόβος κόλασιν

No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that



ἔχει ὁ δὲ φοβούμενος οὐ τέτε-  
λείωται ἐν τῇ ἀγάπῃ.

Ἡμεῖς ἀγαπῶμεν αὐτὸν, ὅτι  
αὐτὸς πρῶτος ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς.

Ἐάν τις εἴπῃ· Ὅτι ἀγαπῶ  
τὸν Θεὸν, καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ  
μισεῖ, ψεύστης ἐστίν· ὁ γὰρ μὴ  
ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ὃν  
ἑώρακε, τὸν Θεὸν, ὃν οὐχ ἑώρακε,  
πῶς δύναται ἀγαπᾶν;

Καὶ ταύτην τὴν ἐντολὴν ἔχο-  
μεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, ἵνα ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν  
Θεὸν, ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν  
αὐτοῦ.

feareth is not made perfect in  
love.

We love him, because he first  
loved us.

If a man say, I love God, and  
hateth his brother, he is a liar:  
for he that loveth not his brother  
whom he hath seen, how can he  
love God whom he hath not seen?

And this commandment have  
we from him, That he who loveth  
God love his brother also.

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MENT OF CHRIST.

It is with the apostle John as it is with the joys of the upper  
sanctuary, his theme is always the same; and yet it is ever new,

for is it not the theme of love—love in its eternal source, and love in its thousand streams—the love of God to sinful man, and the love of the redeemed church to Him, to one another, and to all? The natural conscience testifies very clearly to the *power* of the Godhead by the terror and trembling with which we think of him, and hence the bloody rites and cruel attributes with which heathenism surrounds the divinity; hence the terrors which an earthquake, an eclipse, or a thunderstorm awakens in the bosom of the multitude; hence the terrible dogma of Islam, which reduces all, and resolves all, into the will of God; and hence, too, the anxiety and dread with which we all meet the king of terrors, and prepare for the issues of eternity. It required a revelation to compose the agitated conscience, and open up to our hopes the true character and intentions of God. We knew his power, but we knew not his will, and his terrors made us afraid; and in the book of Revelation we have the delineation of his grace as the proper remedy for our fears. Nature, the universe, creation, is the glorious monument on which the Creator hath engraven the lineaments of his eternal power and Godhead. The Bible is the monument of his grace, on which the eye of the sinner traces with extacy the mercy and love of the Redeemer. Power, wisdom, and majesty, are the prevailing characteristics of the former; love, grace, and fatherly compassion, of the latter. We turn with trembling from the contemplation of the majesty of God, as seen in the laws, dispositions, and systems of the universe, because sin has prostrated the faculties of the mind, and depraved the emotions of the heart. On the other hand, we trace with delight the promises, the covenants, the revelations of the Bible, because they are adapted to the sinner, and tell us of a return to our Father in heaven. It is not God speaking out of the thunders and darkness which surround the throne of the Creator, but the Father of mercies breathing into our ear the messages of love in the person of his incarnate Son. We see in the Deity no longer the irresistible impression of unknown,

and therefore dreaded, majesty and power, which is almost all that our fallen minds can learn of Him from nature ; but we discover, in the New Testament generally, but principally in the character of Jesus Christ, that this almighty, unknown Jehovah, whose works lie scattered through the immensity of space, is as good, gracious, and loving, as He is great and glorious ; that the majesty of the Creator is tempered by the tenderness of the Father ; that He is the very God of peace and love, to whom every one of us is dear above all price, and whose compassion to our perishing souls can be measured only by the agonies of his Son. Nature says, “ He is power ;” John says, “ He is love ;” and both testimonies are necessary in our estimating his glorious character. How often, and in what various forms, is the love of God brought before us in our epistle ? It is, indeed, the substratum which runs through the whole of it, and gives the character to all the writings of the beloved disciple. We have already expatiated on it often, and our hearts delight to follow the apostle in every new path of divine love which he opens up to our view. Let us now proceed with the exposition.

I. *The invisibility of God* is asserted in an absolute, independent sentence, without any apparent connection either with what precedes or follows verse 12. All attempts to connect the “hath seen” (τεθεάται) of verse 12 with the “we have seen” (τεθεάμεθα) of the 14th verse are unnatural efforts, which deserve no consideration. It is possible that the apostle intended the sublime truth to stand alone in the midst of his descriptions of the love of God, as an indication generally of the nature of that all-gracious, loving God ; or the mind of the apostle may have run in some such channel as this :—“ I have told you of God’s love, and recommended your loving Him in return. He is, indeed, invisible, and the bodily organs cannot see Him, but we can *feel* his presence, for He dwelleth in us.” This I take to be the connection. Ye cannot see Him, nor hear his voice,

but you can feel his presence and love, for He dwelleth in you, and ye in Him. It is, indeed, a great and wonderful mystery that we live, and move, and have our being in the presence of the all-pervading, invisible God. His silent, glorious hand guides and sustains the ponderous system of the material universe, but the eye of flesh marks not the movements of his power. His glorious, invisible, unchangeable nature is beyond the vision of the human eye; yea, beyond the knowledge and comprehension of the created universe. We see the glorious works of his hand, which demonstrate his power and Godhead; we see the method or law of his working, but the worker himself we cannot see. The glorious mechanism of the universe, the material and the spiritual world, with all its complications and dependencies, is the visible, audible, tangible demonstration of the almighty power, which, "ever busy, wheels the silent spheres," unseen, but all-seeing; unknown, but all-knowing; impalpable, yet all-pervading; the all-gracious, all-merciful, all-present, eternal God, from whom we have all things, to whom we dedicate ourselves and all things, and in whom we live, and move, and have our being. Our text is the same as John i. 18, which expresses a sentiment common to both Testaments (Ex. xxxiii. 20. Deut. iv. 12. Matt. xi. 27. Luke x. 22). These passages are defined and limited, in a certain measure, by John vi. 46, which seems to refer them to the person of God the *Father*. He is represented as the unknown, incomprehensible God, whose love has been manifested to mankind in the person and work of the Son of God. John i. 18 is a key-passage which opens up the meaning of our text, and harmonizes all the varieties of Scripture on this subject. Thus we can say with truth, "No man hath seen God at any time;" and yet, with Jacob, we can say, in a glorious sense, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved" (Gen. xxxii. 30. Ex. xxiv. 11. iii. 6. Judges xiii. 22. Deut. v. 26). These, and many other passages, assert that we can and do see God, and speka with Him, and see his glory, and hear his voice.



Both assertions are true, natural, and intelligible, when we consider the doctrine taught in John i. 18, and xiv. 9, which is, that the Son is the revealer of the Father; so that to see the character and glory of the Son, is to see the character and glory of the Father who sent Him. We do not see the person and nature of the glorious, immortal God, but in the Son of his love, God manifest in the flesh, we behold the lineaments of his character; so that we are able to love and adore Him as our Father which is in heaven. He is unknown, and yet well-known; invisible, yet manifested in the doing and dying of his Son. To *see* may be taken in a wide sense, including *knowledge* and *comprehension*; and then the assertion would amount to this—No man, (*οὐδεὶς*)—no one, no created being—can comprehend the nature of God. He is, in himself, incomprehensible to angels and men, and the office of the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father is to reveal Him.” The life of Christ is the life of God manifest in the flesh; so that the coming of the Son, his sorrows, tears, and cries, his holy sympathy and compassion for the children of men, his atoning death on the cross, his triumphant resurrection and ascension to the right-hand of God, are all utterances and manifestations of the unseen Father’s grace and love towards his rebellious creatures. When we read, therefore, of the appearances of the glory of God, in the Old Testament and in the New, we are to understand and explain them all of *ὁ Θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ*, “God in Christ,” the Logos, and only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. This is the great idea of mediation, that the Deity, in his absolute nature unseen, unknown, and incomprehensible, should yet, through Christ the Son, make his power and mercy known to mankind, and lead up all that receive his gifts into ever-increasing fellowship with himself. But—

II. If we love one another “God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us;” that is, though we do not see God, yet we can experience the blessedness of his presence and love. God

dwelleth in us by the gifts and operations of the Holy Spirit; so that the church is called an habitation of God in the Spirit, the house where God dwells, and the temple in which He is worshipped (1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. vi. 19. 2 Cor. vi. 16). This dwelling of God in us, and our dwelling in God, can perhaps be best expressed by the word heavenly-mindedness; for the felt presence of God tranquillizes, sanctifies, and blesses the soul, so that holiness, unutterable purity of thought and feeling, becomes our aim and our delight: love, peaceful and serene, fills the whole soul, and sometimes this habit of spiritual peace is heightened into the extacies of inexpressible joy. Has sin not sometimes appeared to you exceeding sinful? Has the cross of the dying Redeemer not sometimes risen up before the eyes of your heart with inexpressible sweetness, surrounded with a radiance of beauty and attractiveness surpassing all this world can give or take? Have you not felt, in the presence of the divine sufferer, new and deeper fountains of love opened in the soul than you had ever thought of, yea, the very life of your being stirred up from its depths beneath, so that love to the holy God, and his Son Jesus Christ, became an overmastering affection, and you could rejoice to be any thing, or do any thing, to live or die, to be tortured, scourged, or crucified, for the name of the Lord Jesus? Have you adoring views of the person and work of the Son of God, so that sin becomes daily more sinful; holiness, peace, goodness, and communion with God, daily more pleasant and joyful? Then indeed you experience the in-dwelling of the God of love, and our text is realized in you—"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." Cherish, then, the feeling of brotherly love, for it is the proof of an in-dwelling God and his perfected love. Search out the members of Jesus wherever you can find them; feed them when they are hungry, clothe them when they are naked, give them the cups of refreshing when they are thirsty, visit them when they are in prison; for in such acts of benevolence ye are fulfilling the

law of Christ, and manifesting the truth of our text—that “God dwelleth in you, and his love is perfected in you.”

III. This reciprocal indwelling of God and the believer is made certain to our minds by the evidence of the Holy Ghost; for it is written (verse 13), “Hereby we know that we dwell in Him and He in us, because He hath given us of his Spirit,” (*ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος*). What is it to dwell in God? It does not mean merely the conviction that we are surrounded with the manifestations of an all-present Deity, and responsible to Him for the actions of our lives. It means, that we walk with God, like Enoch, in the constant fellowship of his love; that we delight in his ways, names, attributes, and entire character, as manifested in Jesus Christ our Lord. His love fills our hearts, his grace guides our steps, his power sustains and defends us in the time of trial, his everlasting arms are around us, and the eye of faith delights in his thousand promises, which, like stars of hope, beckon us on towards the heavenly mansions. This is dwelling in God. We live in the daily consciousness of his presence, in the full assurance of his unchangeable love to us, and in the exercise of that brotherly charity which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things; and, though tempted and tried with manifold temptations of all kinds, and oftentimes all but overwhelmed with the consciousness of sin and unworthiness in his sight,—neglects of duty, lukewarmness instead of zeal, ignorance, idleness, worldliness, carnality, suspicion, unbrotherliness, and such like,—yet, in spite of these, and all other impediments, the flame of divine love to the Redeemer, which the Holy Spirit enkindled within us, burns with a clear and steady lustre, and it shall continue to burn brighter and brighter for ever; for it is written, “Who shall separate us from Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us” (Rom. viii. 35—37). This indwelling of God in the soul,

and the reciprocal indwelling of the believer in God, is evidenced, says the apostle, by the Holy Spirit which He gives—We know it, *because* He hath given us (*ἐκ τοῦ Πνεύματος αὐτοῦ*) *of his Spirit*. This giving of the Holy Spirit was the original promise of God to the believer as a necessary consequence of the Saviour's work of redemption; and whatever showers of refreshing the ancient church may have enjoyed, the full effusion could not take place until the Saviour had fulfilled his part of the covenant of grace, and was glorified in heaven (John vii. 39. xiv. 16, 26. xv. 26. xvi. 7). Then, being proved to be the Redeemer and the Righteous One by the resurrection from the dead, and proved to be the King and Head of creation by the ascension to the right hand of God in our emancipated and immortalized nature, He sheds down, on the day of Pentecost, the baptism of the Holy Ghost, which is the endowment of the whole church of God until the day of his second coming. This endowment is the treasury of grace, out of which the believer draws supplies according to the necessities of his case and the measure of his faith. This is the unction from the Holy One by which we know all things, and to it the apostle refers in the words, "God hath given us of his Spirit." He has made us partakers of the Holy Ghost in all his gifts, graces, and operations; so that the new heart, the blood-sprinkled conscience, the new birth to righteousness, the repentance which needs not to be repented of, the justifying faith of the gospel, the walk with God, and the fruit of the Spirit, are the evidence to our souls that God dwells in us, and we in God.

IV. The fourteenth verse reverberates the tones of compassion and love which the beloved disciple rejoices to hear and to reiterate to the little children. There is no doubt regarding the love of God: it is a great, known, and established fact, that God is love, and we, the apostles, are the witnesses of it; "for we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Observe, one main part of the apostolic



office is to *bear witness* to the truth of God, and in this respect they are following the example of Christ, who is the faithful *witness*, and the first-begotten of the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth (Rev. i. 5). See his character as martyr, or witness, in the following Scriptures, Is. lv. 4. John xviii. 37. 1 Tim. vi. 13. These passages set forth the life and character of the Son of God as the suffering, martyred Head of the church, which, like himself, the Captain of their salvation, must be made perfect through suffering. The prophets, martyrs, and heroes of the faith in the Old-Testament times are called a *cloud of witnesses* (νέφος μαρτύρων, Heb. xii. 1); the apostles were chosen, ordained, and sent forth to be the witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his resurrection from the dead (Acts i. 8. ii. 22. x. 39. Luke xxvi. 43. John xv. 27); and this was, and is, and always must be, the character of the apostolic church. The testimonies of Jesus are, not good books, such as "Paley's Evidences" and "Keith on the Fulfilled Prophecies," however excellent and unanswerable, but a believing church, filled with the powers of the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and bent on the subjugation of the whole world to the sceptre of Christ. These are the witnesses of Christ, and as their testimony becomes stronger, clearer, and more earnest, they pass into the character of *martyrs*, whose blood, from the beginning, has been the seed of the church. The church, like the apostles, has her glorious mission, which is to bear witness to the name and truth of Christ. The field of her labours is the wide world, and the end of her glorious but bloodless victories is to win souls to the Saviour. Her enemies are, ignorance, superstition, vice, and infidelity; and the weapons of her warfare are, not the carnal weapons of the flesh, but the armour of God which the Holy Spirit gives, whereby they are enabled to conquer strongholds, and bring down the lofty imaginations of men. Her messengers and ministers are, not the sacrificing priests of papacy and paganism, but the teachers of righteousness and the witnesses of Christ. The indwelling life of God in her, which unites her

with God, and crucifies the flesh, is the outbursting fountain from which all holy zeal, and missionary labours, and martyr testimonies flow; and in proportion as she realizes her high standing and calling as God's witness upon the earth, will her labours be abundant and her conquests extensive. But the apostle says, "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Love begins in the bosom of the all-glorious Father, whose eternal, uncaused, spontaneous mercy is ever represented as the fountain of human salvation and blessedness (John iii. 16. Rom. v. 8. 1 John iv. 9). Atonement, or the sacrifice of the Lamb of God for our sins, is not intended to draw away the wrath of an angry deity who delighteth in suffering, and must have a stipulated amount of pain endured for every sinner that is spared, but to vindicate the righteousness of a holy and beneficent Lawgiver, whose law is broken, and demonstrate to the universe that his love to the sinner can be equalled only by his hatred of sin; that He can be just, and yet the justifier of the ungodly; that He can be a sin-forgiver without being a sin-indulger; and thus, in the work of the Redeemer, his law is exalted and made honourable, the unfallen creation confirmed in their allegiance, and yet free and abundant mercy proclaimed to a fallen world. He sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world; his Son, his own proper Son, τὸν ἴδιον Υἱὸν (Rom. viii. 32), so that He could call God τὸν ἴδιον Πατέρα (John v. 18), "his proper Father," which the Jews considered the blasphemy of making himself equal with God; "his beloved Son," ὁ ἀγαπητός (Matt. iii. 17. xii. 18. xvii. 5. Mark i. 11. ix. 7. Luke iii. 22. ix. 35. 2 Pet. i. 17); "his only-begotten," ὁ μονογενής (John i. 14, 18. iii. 16, 18. 1 John iv. 9), in whom all fulness of grace and glory dwells. All these expressions demonstrate that Jesus Christ is really and by nature the Son of God, and consequently possessing the nature and attributes of God. How is Christ the Saviour of the world? In what sense has the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world? Read the following passages, which

speaking of God's love to the world, or of Christ's dying for the sins of the world, 1 John ii. 2. John i. 29. iii. 16. iv. 42. xi. 51. In 1 Tim. iv. 10, He is said to be the Saviour of all men, but especially of those that believe; and in a considerable number of Scriptures the Saviour is said to have died for all men (1 Tim. ii. 6, 5, 4. Heb. ii. 9. Rom. v. 18). All these convey the same idea which is contained in the words of our text—"God sent the Son, the Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42). He is not the Saviour of the world in the sense of the universalists, that all mankind will eventually be saved; for this contradicts both the spirit and letter of the divine word from beginning to end, and nullifies the eternal distinction between righteousness and sin. Nor is He the Saviour of the world in the sense that He shed his blood equally for all men; gave and gives his Spirit equally to all men; and having done so much for all, and refusing to do any thing more for any, leaves the whole of them afterwards to sink or swim, according to their own free will; for this would make man in reality his own Saviour, and nullify two-thirds of the Scriptures at least, which represent Jehovah as the Redeemer and Saviour, whose purpose depends, not on the will of the creature, but subordinates all creatures into harmony with itself. Others have an easy explanation of the difficulty, by saying simply, "The world here means the church," which would indeed clear up the difficulty, but it would be at the expense of the clearest principle of exposition, and therefore can never be admitted. I have already argued this question on 1 John ii. 2, and need not here enter upon it. We may admit, with the Arminians, that Christ died, in a certain sense, for the whole human race, and in that sense He is the Saviour of the world, the Saviour of all men, but especially of those that believe. His atoning death is sufficient for the wants of the whole world, and no needy creature coming to Him for pardon will ever be cast out. The fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness is full and overflowing, and whosoever will may take of the waters of life freely. This

gospel of God's grace is not confined to a nation, as, in the days of old, the divine favour was limited to the Jews, but freely presented to the whole world.

“Waft, waft, ye winds, his story,  
 And you, ye waters, roll,  
 Till, like a sea of glory,  
 It spread from pole to pole :  
 'Till, o'er our ransom'd nature  
 The Lamb for sinners slain,  
 Redeemer, King, Creator,  
 In bliss returns to reign.”

You are not shut out from the proclamations and invitations of divine mercy, for God has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world, and that includes you ; He invites the weary and heavy-laden to come to Him for rest, and that includes you ; the angel-song over the birth of the Saviour was, “Peace on earth, goodwill to men,” and that also includes you : so that you are without excuse if you remain in the entanglements and defilement of sin. Attend to the glorious announcement, “The Father sent the Son, the Saviour of the world,” and be done with all dark suspicions of the character of God, and give yourself fully and freely to the obedience of the faith.

V. The confession that Jesus is *the Son of God* is the oldest, simplest, and most comprehensive confession of faith in the world (verse 15). The assertion that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is the ground we have to maintain against antichrist, who, by a thousand cunning devices and human inventions, seeks to nullify the finished work of Christ for the redemption of his people. If according to the opinion of the Unitarians or Socinians we were to interpret this verse the meaning would become ridiculous, “Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is a good, holy man, God dwelleth in Him, and he in Him.” Sonship is therefore much more than saintship. To confess that Jesus is the Son of God is to admit that He is all that He claimed to be in his manifestations on earth. He is the promised Messiah,



the King of Israel, the seed of the woman, and the desire of all nations. The prophecies are fulfilled in Him; the glorious promises of life and immortality have been manifested and realized in Him; the long successions of prophets, priests, and kings of the olden times have ended in Him; and now the light that extinguishes all other lights, the living sacrifice which ends and gives significancy to the offerings of the law, and the King, the Son of David, to whom all other kings pointed, and whom none shall ever succeed, is *the Son of God*. This is a great and glorious confession, and hence the effect of it is, "that God dwelleth in us, and we in Him." The name *Jesus* shews Him to be human, and the name *Son of God* that He is divine; so that the confession, "Jesus is the Son of God," is substantially the same as the doctrine of the three Creeds—the Apostles', the Nicene, and the Athanasian—concerning the person of Christ. These are, indeed, the two great elements of the faith of the universal church concerning the person of the Redeemer—He is human, and He is divine—the Son of man, and the Son of God. All the weakness, tenderness, and sympathies of man are united in his person with the majesty and glory of God. He is the God-Man, the one Mediator between God and men, in whom, as the Head of the church and Governor of the universe, all things are reconciled and recapitulated (Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 20). Hence the main effort of Mohammed was to deny the sonship of Christ, which he opposes and blasphemes on all occasions (Korán, ix.; and in chap. cxii. he says, "God is one, the eternal God," لم يلد ولم يولد. He begetteth not, neither is He begotten, neither is there any like unto Him." The common saying among the Arabs, "God is one: He has neither son nor mother," shews how opposed they are to the idea of the Son of God, and also how widely and successfully the papists have propagated their opinions about the mother of God. If He be really the Son of God He cannot have any beginning; for if the Deity was eternally perfect and capable of paternity, we may ask, with Origen, Why put it off?

God has no infancy, manhood, or old age; and therefore, if He have a Son in his own image, He must be boundless, immortal, omnipotent, omnipresent, without a beginning, even as Adam begat a son in his own image, viz. limited, mortal, fallen, and having a beginning, like his father. If Adam had begotten a son who had no beginning, would he have been in the likeness of the father? And if God had begotten a Son who had a beginning, would He be in the image of the Father? This agrees with the usages of Scripture in the New Testament; for I hold that the phrase "Son of God" (*ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*) in the apostolic writings, as applied to Christ, denotes deity, and can on no principles of sound criticism be explained away. The Jews understood it in this sense, and so did, and do, the Moslems, and, I will add, it is the natural signification of the expression. We hold fast, then, the ancient confession, "Jesus is the Son of God," as the anchor of our souls in the dark and cloudy day, when the floods beat and the rains descend upon us. We turn to Him as the suffering, sympathizing Jesus, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, in whom we have the noblest, holiest example, and yet we honour and adore Him as the Son of God; the Beloved, the Only-begotten, whom the saints have always worshipped, whom the Father commands the angels to worship (Heb. i. 6), and who is surrounded with the songs and hallelujahs of the redeemed in glory (Rev. v. 8—14). We have no reserve in serving, honouring, and adoring the Son, as if we were in so far detracting from the honour and service due to the Father; for we have the word of the Lord for it, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, and "he that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father" (John v. 23). If Jesus be *the Son of God*, the incarnation is a reality, yea, the greatest of realities. Atonement of sin is possible, yea, probable and certain; Satan, the enemy, with his works, death and sin, may be abolished; heaven's gates may yet be opened over our perishing world; the Spirit of life and love may take up his abode with us, and this

poor earth become once more the paradise of God. All this, and much more, depends on, and is contained in, the confession of faith, "Jesus is the Son of God." It is the central truth, out of which the doctrine of the Holy Trinity follows as a necessary consequence; and wherever it is firmly believed the orthodox faith of the ancient and universal church is established.

"Te per orbem terrarum  
 Sancta confitetur ecclesia,  
 Patrem immensæ majestatis,  
 Venerandum tuum verum unicum Filium  
 Sanctum quoque paracletum Spiritum."

VI. The apostle returns, in the sixteenth verse, to the theme of *God's love*, to which he makes all others subordinate and subsidiary. "We have known and believed the love which God has to us," *ἐν ἡμῖν*. This phrase is, as Beza says, for *ἐς ἡμᾶς*, "towards us;" the love which He has towards us, and not the love which He has *in us*. The Vulgate's *in nobis* is therefore false, and should be *in nos*. The meaning is, "We have known and believed the love which God has manifested towards us in sending his Son to bear the sins of his people. This shews us the power of faith, which realizes the unseen realities of eternity, and appropriates the proclamations and promises of God. We have known and believed his Son, and this firm conviction gives us peace and joy in believing. We realize something of the grace and goodness of our Father in heaven, so that we can say from experience, "God is love, and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." Twice in this chapter the apostle uses the expression "God is love," as if he wished to silence all our guilty doubts and fears, and fill our hearts with the boundless, ineffable fulness of Jehovah's love. Often the apostles assure us that God loves us, and has given his Son for us, to manifest his grace; but here the apostle John assures us that *He is love itself*, the eternal fountain of every thing gracious, blessed, and lovely on earth, in heaven, and in the whole creation.

“O, render thanks to God above,  
The fountain of eternal love;  
Whose mercy firm through ages past  
Has stood, and shall for ever last.”

All the gifts of his providence and grace, in their various forms and measures, and in the different ages and generations of the church, are the streams that flow from this fountain of love. Think of the sins which divine mercy has forgiven, the souls which it has delivered from Satan, death, and hell: think of the glory in heaven which is prepared for the people of God when the earthly pilgrimage is ended—the white robes, the crowns of righteousness, the harps of gold, the eternal communion with God: think over the wonderful story of a Saviour’s love; how He came from heaven to seek and save us; how He concealed his glory in a tabernacle of flesh; how He bore all contradiction of sinners patiently for our sakes; how He tasted the bitterness, and overcame the sharpness, of death for us; how He rose in our nature, and ascended to the right hand of God, where He ever lives to make intercession for us, and from whence He shall come again to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe: think of the person, work, and offices of the Holy Ghost in the salvation of the people of God, and all the Lord’s dealings with your own souls; and then say, It is all love from beginning to end: it is all the wonderful working of Him whose name and nature is love. The one glorious truth, “God is love,” explains it all, and leads us to the fountain-head from which so many mercies flow. Let our hearts join in the beautiful Doxology of Bishop Ken—

“Praise God from whom all blessings flow,  
Praise Him all creatures here below,  
Praise Him above, ye heavenly host,  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.”

VII. The seventeenth verse has several difficulties which are



not easily removed, and expositors differ greatly as to the construction. Beza, whose opinion is of much weight, connects *ὅτι* in the last clause with *ἐν τούτῳ*, and disposes the sentence thus, “*Charitas adimpletur in nobis per hoc quod qualis ille est tales et nos simus in hoc mundo, ut fiduciam habeamus in die judicii.*” Love is fulfilled in us by this, that as He is, so are we in this world, in order that we may have confidence in the day of judgment. John does, indeed, often connect *ἐν τούτῳ* with *ὅτι* (see ii. 3, 5. iii. 16, 19. iv. 13. v. 2; compare iii. 1), and in so far all is clear; but I can find in the epistle no example of *ἐν τούτῳ* being connected with *ὅτι* when there is a long clause depending on *ἵνα* thrown in between them. Such a construction is too artistic for the noble simplicity of the apostle John. Besides, John does connect *ἐν τούτῳ* and *ἵνα* (see John xv. 8. xvii. 2. iv. 34), and thereby justifies us in construing here according to the natural order and arrangement of the clauses, thus, “Hereby is love perfected in us, in order that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, and this, because as He is, so are we in this world.” The indwelling of God in our souls (*ἐν τούτῳ*) perfects in us (*μεθ’ ἡμῶν*, Acts xv. 33) love to God and love to man, so that we shall have confidence before the Lord our Judge in the day of his appearing; and this confidence we shall have, because as He is, so are we in this world: his enemies are our enemies; his friends are our friends; the reproaches that fall on Him fall on us; we stand on his side in the struggle between sin and righteousness; we are planted with Him in the likeness of his death, and we shall be, also, in the likeness of his resurrection. The expression *ἡ ἀγάπη μεθ’ ἡμῶν* is unusual. Our translators and Morus take the expression for *ἡ ἀγάπη ἡμῶν*, and give it the meaning of our love towards God, or, more generally, our love to God and the brethren. Jerome, Kistemaker, and others, take it in the opposite sense—“*In hoc perfecta est charitas Dei nobiscum,*” &c. De Wette leaves it undetermined in his translation whether it means God’s love to us, or ours to Him—“*Darin ist die Liebe vollendet bei*

uns"—“Herein is love perfected with us.” I believe the ἀγάπη here must refer to our love to God, because, in the mind of the apostle John, the perfect love of Jehovah to the fallen race of man is always placed in the giving of his Son, and never in any thing else.

1st. There is such a thing as *perfect love* to God and man wrought in the soul by the indwelling of God the Holy Ghost. This love bears all things, hopes all things, believes all things, and assimilates our souls to the image of our heavenly Master. When we consider the fruits of the divine love, in the holiness which it works, in the mighty effects which it produces, in the trials, temptations, and difficulties which it surmounts, we may call it *perfect*, and, more especially, as its tendency is to make us perfect, as our Father in heaven is perfect.

2dly. There is ἡ ἡμέρα τῆς κρίσεως before us all, “the day of judgment,” when the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the moral administration of God justified in the sight of the universe (See Matt. x. 15. xi. 22, 24. xii. 36. Mark vi. 11. 2 Pet. ii. 9. iii. 7. 1 John iv. 17). So there is ὥρα κρίσεως, “the hour of judgment” (Rev. xiv. 7); and “the judgment of the great day” (Jude 6); and often it is referred to simply as “the judgment,” κρίσις (Matt. xii. 41. Luke x. 14. xi. 31, 32. Heb. xi. 27). In proportion as our minds are impressed with its nearness and reality, will we be anxious to know in what way we shall be able to abide the coming of the day of God; and our text gives us the assurance, that if love be perfected in our souls we shall have confidence in the presence of the Judge. Love is the vinculum which binds the members to the Head, the sap which circulates from the stem into the branches of the Vine, and those who realize it in time shall not be confounded in eternity. The Judge is our friend. The ἐκεῖνος, *He*, in the latter clause of the verse, seems naturally to refer to *God*, but, like the αὐτὸς and ἐκεῖνος in iii. 2, 3, it must, in the end, refer to Θεὸς ἐν Χριστῷ, “God in Christ,” because He is the proper example whose footsteps we are to follow; and

He also is to be King of the judgment-day and the visible Judge of the living and the dead. Now the assertion of the apostle is, that we shall not be ashamed before Him at his coming, but, being united to Him by perfect love, we shall have confidence (*παρρησία*, "fiducia," 2 Cor. vii. 4. Eph. iii. 12. Heb. iii. 6. iv. 16. x. 19, 35. 1 John ii. 28. iii. 21. iv. 17. v. 14), even in the great day of God. Surely this is a great and noble promise, and ought to make us long exceedingly for that perfect love on which it is founded. We shall never perish. The arms of the mighty God of Jacob are underneath and around us, and, even in the great day of God, who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Jesus Christ, the Judge, is their Redeemer, who laid down his life for them, and the band of mutual love unites them to Him for evermore.

"Jesus, thy blood and righteousness,  
My beauty are, and glorious dress :  
Midst flaming worlds, in these arrayed,  
With joy shall I lift up my head."

3dly. What is the ground of this confidence? Answer, Because *as He is, so are we in this world*. There is no need for translating in the past, "because as He was, so are we in this world," though the sense is good. Jesus, the Redeemer, is always present with his church, and will be so till the end of the world. His enemies are nearly the same as they were in the days of his flesh, and the gospel of his grace is treated as it was in the days of old. As He is, so are we in this world. We joyfully bear with Him the burden of the cross, in the hope of sharing the glories of his crown and kingdom. We have put on his likeness and imbibed his spirit, so that we are fully identified with his cause; and by doing so we have the best evidence that we shall have confidence at his coming. May the everlasting mercy shield us in that great day of God Almighty! Human help is then in vain.

“Judex ergo cum sedebit,  
Quidquid latet apparebit,  
Nil inultum remanebit !

Quid tum miser tunc dicturus !  
Quem patronum rogaturus,  
Cum nec justus sit securus ?

Rex tremendæ majestatis !  
Qui salvandos salvas gratis,  
Salva me, fons pietatis !”

VIII. Fear (*φόβος*, verse 18). *Φόβος*, like the corresponding word in Hebrew, Latin, and English, has two very different meanings, which, indeed, naturally run into one another, and sometimes can hardly be distinguished. It signifies *terror*, or dread, and this seems to be the original signification (Heb. ii. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 14. Matt. xviii. 4; so יִרְאָה, Gen. ix. 2. Jonah i. 10, 15, and פֶּחַד, Deut. xi. 25. Ps. liii. 6). This is evidently the meaning of the word in our text, “There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear.” He that really loves God is delivered from the slavish fear which torments the minds of the ignorant and unbelieving when they are once awakened to the dangers of their condition. This very love has introduced the *filial* fear called the fear of the Lord (*φόβος τοῦ Κυρίου*, 2 Cor. ii. 11, and יִרְאָת יְהוָה, Ps. xix. 10. Prov. viii. 13. ix. 10), which casteth all slavish fear out, and lifts up the soul in unutterable longings after the likeness of our Father in heaven. We are brought into his family, and share all the love, peace, confidence, and joy of his children; He has taken us into his banqueting-house, and his banner over us is love; all our guilty fears and suspicions are dissolved in the innumerable memorials of his tenderness and love; while every additional condescension on his part, and every additional act of gratitude and obedience on ours, strengthens the cords of affection which unite us to our God. The torment and terror of a troubled conscience from



the dread of unpardoned sin and an avenging God, have passed away before the assurance of the love of God, and all our alarms and fearful anticipations of coming doom have subsided into the sunshine of peace and love at the sight of the bleeding cross. Fear has, indeed, torment, great and awful torment, to which the torments of mere bodily pain may never be compared. I have seen, in a cold room, without a fire, and in a cold winter day, the drops of perspiration falling down to the ground from the cheek and forehead, owing to the terror of this tormenting fear. When we are brought under the thunders of the law of Sinai, and the cross is not yet in sight, the convulsions of the terrified spirit become unsupportable, and nothing can exceed our torments, save the agonies of future woe. The clouds of divine wrath are suspended over the soul, while, like Bunyan's prisoner in the iron cage, deliverance seems impossible. Then the regrets for the past become intensified into *remorse*, and the anticipations of the future darkened into despair, and the desolate heart realizes the words of the apostle, "Fear hath torment." Many Germans find fault with the *dè* in the last clause of the verse: our translators, and some others, paid no attention to it, which can hardly be justified: Lücke defends *dè* against the attacks of the hypercritical school.

IX. We may translate *ἀγαπῶμεν*, in the nineteenth verse, with Grotius, Jerome, and others, as a subjunctive, thus, "Let us love Him, for He has first loved us;" but this is not so simple or so natural as the indicative, and there is nothing in the sense, or in the connection, which would lead us to take it subjunctively. The verse is, then, a direct statement, which contains two glorious truths, in which we see the exceeding excellence of the gospel of Christ.

1st. *We love Him.* The nearest antecedent is *God*, and therefore the ellipsis must be supplied thus, "We love God, because He first loved us." Whenever we are able to say with truth, "We love God," the fetters of sin and worldliness that

bound us are broken, and the soul begins her flight towards her native skies. We are then no more strangers and foreigners, but citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, and heirs of the inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. A new affection, like a fountain from a rock, has been opened in the heart, and a thousand new hopes, like stars in the night, shed their radiance round the pilgrim's path. The eye—that is, the eye of faith—hath been attracted by a great and ennobling object, before which the world, with all its glittering splendour, becomes dim and unattractive. Old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. *We love God*, and the enlarged and satisfied heart, finding its object and home where it can brighten and expand infinitely, rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory. This is the first sentiment contained in the text, and when we are able to adopt it as our own we are not far from the kingdom of God.

2dly. The reason, or cause, is given in the second clause of the verse, "*We love Him, because He first loved us.*" His love is the cause of ours, and, being caused, it did not depend on our own free will in the beginning, for without his antecedent love we would never have loved Him at all. His affection to us in this early inclination of his heart could not have been the love of complacency or delight, for there was nothing in us which could procure the approbation of the holy eye of God but the love of pity, which compassionates the wretched, and seeks to relieve the miserable. We seek no other cause for his love save his own eternal mercy. It was his good pleasure to love us. He did love, and who shall fathom the depths of this love? He might have left us to perish in the defilement of sin, as He has left the fallen angels; but, instead of that, He loved us from the foundation of the world, and made provision in his Son for our restoration to his favour. As to the date of this love, we can say it has no date, for it is eternal (Eph. i. 4); as to the extent of this love, it includes all that believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; as to the intensity of it, it is measured only by

the agonies of his only-begotten Son ; and as to consequences, it leads us to the glory of the Redeemer and the many-mansioned house of our Father in heaven. On this early, first, eternal love of God, read the following Scriptures: Rom. viii. 28. 2 Thess. ii. 13. 2 Tim. i. 9. 1 Pet. i. 20. Rom. xvi. 25, 26. Eph. i. 3—6. It is surely very blessed to think of this ancient affection of God, seeing the strength of an attachment is proved by the length of its continuance and the obstacles which it surmounts. I delight to trace this early love of God in the successive ages of the church, from prophet to prophet, brightening and ripening from dispensation to dispensation, until the Saviour was born in Bethlehem ; from whence we follow Him to the cross, and to the grave of Joseph, and to Mount Olivet, and to the heaven of heavens, from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead at the last day. It is all nothing but this ancient love of God, unfolding as the ages roll over us its various fruits of blessedness to the children of men. This is not the indiscriminate affection which sheds its benignity over all men without positively triumphing over the reluctance of any, but the effectual love of an omnipotent, all-ruling God, which fixes upon its objects, conquers their obstinacy, attracts them by the intensity of its fervour, and brings them in the end to the sanctuary above.

X. The twentieth and twenty-first verses are given to warn us against *hypocrisy* in regard to the principle and practice of brotherly love. There is a danger lest the mind should be occupied with the distant, to the neglect of the more immediate duties of our Christian calling. Many can commiserate the condition of the distant heathen, without sighing over the unregenerate and dissipated at home. This rather natural principle of our nature is often taken advantage of by hypocrites and worldly professors to separate the faith of the Gospel from the morality of the Gospel—the duties which we owe to God from the duties which we owe to our brethren. This is the



substantial idea of the last two verses of the chapter, and we must now attend to it more particularly.

1st. God is unseen, and his mercy bears with the transgressions of men without immediate punishment, and this is the reason that men pretend to love God, while they live at enmity with their brethren. They separate the speculative from the practical, and hold to the orthodoxy of the creed, while their lives are a slander upon the morality of the gospel. They will talk of the love of God, and boast of their knowledge of his truth, and pride themselves that they are not like publicans and other men, while they are violating the clearest principles of brotherly love, and living, though they know it not, without God and without Christ in the world.

John calls them liars. Brotherly love is so clear, holy, and universal a Christian principle, that he who violates it can lay no claim to the name or the privileges of Christians. His baptism is a mere form, his profession only nominal, and all his pretensions to the love and knowledge of God are vain and delusive. He cannot love God and hate his brother. The two feelings, of love to God and love to the children of God, are so closely connected in the nature of things, that the apostle deems their separation impossible.

2dly. He argues from the *seen* to the *unseen*, for he says, "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" The obligations which bind us to love the brethren are, to a well-regulated Christian mind, very strong, and, we should say, irresistible. If we have really felt the bitterness of sin and the agonies of a burdened conscience, we will naturally be led to sympathize with those who have passed through the same deep waters. If we rejoice in the hopes of a bright and glorious future, all our sins being obliterated in the cross of Christ, we will seek to associate with the whole redeemed family, whose mansions are prepared in the house not made with hands, above. We have the same enemies, the same friends, the same hopes and fears, the same God,



Saviour, and Sanctifier, and the same eternal weight of glory when the trials and struggles of our pilgrimage are done. Hence the bands of our brotherhood are of the strongest kind, and the obligations to the duty of brotherhood most clear and binding. We see these brethren, and know all their dangers: their falls and temptations, their tears of penitence, and their joy in the restored sunshine of their Father's love, are all our own; and hence, in loving them we are only magnifying the divine grace common to all the saints, and doing honour to the one heavenly Father whose image they all bear. To hate the brethren, viz. in the sense of the apostle John, not to love them, is to violate the strongest obligations of a sacred spiritual relationship, and nullify, as far as in us lies, the whole work of God in the redemption and sanctification of the soul. How, in such circumstances, can we pretend to love God? Can we love Him and hate his children? Can we love and adore the Father of mercies while hating the objects of his mercy, for whom He has done so much? Besides, He is unseen: his names, attributes, and character are seen only through a glass, darkly; and faith, even when strong and ardent, gives us but indistinct views of the invisible eternal God. All this shews the utter impossibility of loving God and hating the children of God.

3dly. Hence the commandment which we have received of Him is, "That he who loveth God, love his brother also." The commandment here referred to is the new commandment given by Christ to his disciples (1 John ii. 8. John xiii. 34. xv. 12. 1 John iii. 11). The *ἀπ' αὐτοῦ*, *from Him*, therefore, refers to Christ, and the difference suggested by Lücke between *ἐκεῖνος* and *αὐτός* is finical, and without foundation in Scripture. The meaning is, "We have received this commandment from Christ, that he who loveth God, love his brother also." We are obliged to fulfil this duty of brotherly love, not only by the relations that exist between the brethren, but also by the command and example of Christ. Bear it in mind, therefore, that the command of the blessed Saviour is, that we should love one

another, and that where this brotherly love is wanting, there is no evidence that we love God. I have already stated my conviction that our love to one another in the present generation of the church is very cold and distant, or the middle walls which sin has erected between the children of God would speedily be broken down. It is probable these partitions will stand till the time of persecution comes upon us, and in the mean time we must break holes in them, and reach our hands over them the best way we can. May God fill us with the spirit of love to all saints, for the sake of Jesus, our common High Priest and Redeemer! Amen.

“Selig durch die Liebe,  
Götter durch die Liebe,  
-Menschen Göttern gleich;  
Liebe macht den Himmel  
Himmlicher und die Erde  
Zu dem Himmelreich.”

## CHAPTER XII.

Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς, ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ γεγέννηται· καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα, ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ.

Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκουμεν ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ Θεοῦ, ὅταν τὸν Θεὸν ἀγαπῶμεν, καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν.

Αὕτη γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἵνα τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν· καὶ αἱ ἐντολαὶ αὐτοῦ βαρεῖαι οὐκ εἰσίν.

Ὅτι πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, νικᾷ τὸν κόσμον· καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἡ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν.

Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ νικῶν τὸν κόσμον, εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ;

Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος, Ἰησοῦς ὁ Χριστός· οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον, ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ τῷ αἵματι· καὶ τὸ Πνεῦμά ἐστι τὸ μαρτυροῦν, ὅτι τὸ Πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια.

Ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ Πατὴρ, ὁ Λόγος,

Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

For there are three that bear record in heaven: the Father, the

καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ  
τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι.

Καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες  
ἐν τῇ γῇ, τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ,  
καὶ τὸ αἷμα· καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν  
εἰσιν.

Εἰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῶν ἀνθρώ-  
πων λαμβάνομεν, ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ  
Θεοῦ μείζων ἐστίν· ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν  
ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Θεοῦ, ἣν μεμαρ-  
τύρηκε περὶ τοῦ Υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.

Ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ  
Θεοῦ, ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν  
ἑαυτῷ· ὁ μὴ πιστεύων τῷ Θεῷ,  
ψεύστην πεποίηκεν αὐτὸν, ὅτι  
οὐ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν  
ἣν μεμαρτύρηκεν ὁ Θεὸς περὶ τοῦ  
Υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία,  
ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ  
Θεός· καὶ αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ  
αὐτοῦ ἐστίν.

Ὁ ἔχων τὸν Υἱὸν, ἔχει τὴν  
ζωὴν· ὁ μὴ ἔχων τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ  
Θεοῦ, τὴν ζωὴν οὐκ ἔχει.

Word, and the Holy Ghost : and  
these three are one.

And there are three that bear  
witness in earth ; the spirit, and  
the water, and the blood : and  
these three agree in one.

If we receive the witness of  
men, the witness of God is greater:  
for this is the witness of God  
which he hath testified of his  
Son.

He that believeth on the Son of  
God hath the witness in himself:  
he that believeth not God hath  
made him a liar ; because he be-  
lieveth not the record that God  
gave of his Son.

And this is the record, that  
God hath given to us eternal life ;  
and this life is in his Son.

He that hath the Son hath life ;  
and he that hath not the Son of  
God hath not life.

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WE can easily trace two great tendencies in the Christian church from the beginning, viz. the longing after a quiet, contemplative life, and the desire to subjugate the whole world to the dominion of Christ. These are the home and the foreign departments in the visible kingdom of the Son of God, and are fitly represented by the apostles John and Paul. When the church is called upon to fight the battles of the faith, she is cheered on and encouraged in her work by the apostle of the Gentiles, whose energy of spirit, and doctrines of the justifying righteousness of Christ, form the surest guarantee of her triumph. *Faith* is the motto inscribed upon the flag of the warriors of the cross, and their aim is, to bring all nations to the obedience of the gospel. Look, however, into the body of the faithful, and you can discern multitudes in whom all the graces of the Christian life are variously manifested, but in whom *love* is more prominent than *faith*. They delight not so much in the battle-field, where the martyr's crown is to be won, or in the shout of victory, when the enemies are overthrown, as in the green pastures and still waters, where they can follow the footsteps of the Good Shepherd, and drink in more and more of the fulness of his grace. The centre of their Christian consciousness is love, the love of the apostle John, and love radiates to its widest circumference. They gaze in the face of perfect beauty (2 Cor. ii. 18), until their longings are all satisfied, and their features are brightened into his image. *Regeneration* is the position from which they contemplate the Christian system, and the tests of discipleship with them will be the Christian life, rather than an orthodox creed. These two tendencies we find everywhere in Germany,

and each, when carried to excess, has given rise to errors, speculations, and heresies of many kinds. With these general observations, let us turn to the exposition. In the fourth chapter we have followed the apostle through many of the delineations of divine love, and now we would refresh our hearts and minds with the same glorious theme in the fifth.

I. *Jesus is the Christ.* This is the great proposition of the apostle John, and of the New Testament, for which so many prophets, apostles, and martyrs have shed their blood; and he that really believes it is born of God (ver. 1). The word Jesus denotes the weakness and humanity of the Redeemer. It is his human name, which connects Him with the race of Adam, and is therefore very dear to the saints of God, inasmuch as it connects them with the sympathies of the divine sufferer. It is the balm of Gilead for all wounded and broken hearts.

“It makes the wounded spirit whole,  
And calms the troubled breast;  
'Tis manna to the hungry soul,  
And to the weary rest.”

It connects Him whose lifetime is eternity with Nazareth, Bethlehem, Calvary, Olivet; and thus, from the facts, miracles, and histories of his material limited existence, as from so many starting-points, leads the soul from the human to the divine, from the limited to the illimitable, from weakness, sorrow, and pain, to the effulgence of the glorious and ineffable God. *Christ* means *anointed*, and carries the mind at once to the promises, types, and predictions of the Old Testament, which were intended to prepare the way for the promised deliverer. He is the Prophet, Priest, and King of his people, in whom they find a supply for all their wants. The ignorant creation, fallen from God, and without the means of returning to the tree of knowledge, finds in the anointed Prophet the fountain of living intelligence, where it can attain to the comprehension of heavenly wisdom.

He is the revealer of the unseen Jehovah, so that He himself could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." As the revealing Prophet of his church He is the glorious centre of the whole system of prophecy from the beginning of the world. The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy (Rev. xix. 10). But the Jews contemplated the coming Messiah as a King, the anointed Son of David, in whom the wants of the nation were to be supplied, and their wrongs redressed. If we believe, therefore, that Jesus is the Christ, we must believe that He is the *King* of Israel, in whom all the Old-Testament predictions of the Messianic glory and majesty are destined to be realized. He is the royal Prince, sanctified and sent by the Father to give liberty to the captives, and open the prison to them that are bound. In Him the believing soul finds all, and more than all, that the longing heart can desire. Grace, mercy, and love to the needy and the wretched, flow freely from his royal bounty, and his arm is ever stretched out to defend and protect all that take refuge in his cross. He is the Priest, and from Him, as the great High Priest of our profession, all the streams of divine mercy flow. He died as the sin-bearing Lamb, in whom all the sacrifices and offerings of the law had their fulfilment, and He arose and ascended to the skies as the living Head and Intercessor of his church, in whom all the functions of the royal priesthood are centered and consummated for ever. Thus the three great wants of the fallen creation are met and supplied in Him: there is knowledge for our ignorance, pardon for our guilt, and freedom from the bondage of our fall. To believe that Jesus is the Christ, therefore, is a mighty and soul-stirring faith, the very centre, indeed, and substance of the whole Christian system. Hence the conclusion of the apostle, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God;" and hence the efforts of antichrist have ever been directed, in one way or other, to deny the great doctrine that Jesus is the Christ (1 John ii. 22), well knowing, that, if the Son of God be really acknowledged by the nations as the Prophet, Priest, and



King of the church, he must soon cease to sit in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God (2 Thess. ii. 4). These are the confessions of faith respecting the person of the Mediator in the New Testament, and it may be instructive to mention them briefly.

1st. Jesus Christ is *ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *the Son of God* (Mark iii. 11. John i. 40. ix. 34, 35. Acts viii. 37). A multitude of Scriptures bring out into prominence the sonship as the great characteristic of the Mediator. This confession, "Jesus is the Son of God," is the most absolute, intellectual, and purely spiritual in the Scripture. It involves no reference to nationality, and is consequently the most appropriate form of faith to be presented to the Gentile nations. As Messiah, He belongs to the hated, despised Jewish race; but as the Son of God, He is the Life, and Redeemer, and Friend of all who acknowledge and believe that there is a God. This, then, is the glorious Gospel which we have to present to the Gentile nations, and especially to all who acknowledge a God. "God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). The Messiah is for the Jews, but the Son is for the world. But it is asked, "What is the meaning of the words *ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ*, *the Son of God*?" I answer, "They can only mean one or other of two things—He is a holy man, a Prophet of the Lord," and this is the Unitarian or Rationalistic exposition; or "He is the Son of God by nature, and consequently a divine person, one with his Father as to nature and attributes," and this is the sense of the Christian church in all climes, nations, and ages, from the apostles' times until the present day. Against the Socinian or Unitarian doctrine of a mere *adoptive* sonship I offer the following arguments: (1) It seems to be really making much ado about nothing if their doctrine be true; for how is it possible that such consequences should, or could, follow the announcement of the doctrine that "Jesus is a holy man, a true prophet of the Lord?" The Jews must be stirred up to mad-



ness, the earth must confederate together, kingdoms must be overthrown, and a new age of light and benediction dawn over the world, by the preaching of the doctrine that Jesus is a holy man. God's almighty love is seen in giving the Son; man's greatest glory in receiving Him; angels deem it an honour to attend, minister unto, and worship Him; and eternal death and damnation are the consequences of rejecting Him; all of which is pointless, trivial, and utterly unlike the truthful, holy God, if Jesus Christ, his Son, be nothing more than a mere man.

(2) But we observe that the Unitarian sense of the word is *unnatural*, and cannot be adopted, except in extreme cases, where the meaning would seem absolutely to require it. Think of the Son as you may, the essential, necessary idea is ever present to the thoughts that He must possess the nature of the Father. This is taken for granted by the Saviour in a multitude of Scriptures, when He proceeds, as the Son of the Father, to forgive sins, still the tempests by a word, and do the works of his Father. (3) I maintain that the phrase "Son of God" (ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ), in the New Testament, implies deity, as has, indeed, been abundantly proved by Dr. A. Carson and others.

How is it possible on any other principle to expound the phrase "Son of God" in Heb. i. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, and similar passages?

(4) But the difficulties increase every step, and hem in the expositor at every turn. How can you, on the Unitarian hypothesis, explain the terms, "The blessed Son of God," "The proper Son (ἰδιος Υἱὸς, Rom viii. 32) of God," and "the only-begotten Son of God?" On the simple, natural principle of exposition, all these are easy, for Jesus is really the Son of God, and consequently the divine Redeemer of the world. The Jews also understood the phrase as we do, and charged Jesus with blasphemy for using it (John xix. 7); and yet, strange to say, the Saviour died on the cross in the presence of the Jewish multitudes, asserting that He was ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ εὐλογητοῦ (Θεοῦ), "the Christ, the Son of the blessed God."

(5) It strengthens our interpretation of the phrase "Son of God"

when we find, in other independent passages, that the names, work, titles, acts, and attributes of God are freely attributed to Him (Titus ii. 13. Phil. ii. 6, 7. Rom. ix. 5). (6) The reflex influence of the Unitarian interpretation of the whole system of Bible truth should make us hesitate before receiving their principles of exposition. For if Jesus, the Son of God, be not really divine, the doctrine of atonement, as it seems to be taught in the Scriptures, is false; so, also, the doctrine of sin and the belief in the satanic agency must be false; and the glories of the redeemed church before the throne are a mere figure of speech. In fact, the whole system of redemption stands or falls with the doctrine of the real sonship of Christ. The person of the divine Mediator is the centre around which the whole system moves, and, when it is removed, the entire orb falls to pieces. We have dwelt a little longer on this confession of faith, because it is so important for the Gentile nations.

2dly. In our text we have the second brief statement of saving faith—"Jesus is the Christ;" which is much fuller than the other, and embodies the doctrine of the official person of the Mediator as the anointed Prophet, Priest, and King of his church. He is the centre of the holy people; the root, and the offspring of David; the High Priest of their temple; the promised Messiah and deliverer, for whose coming Israel and the nations waited so patiently and so long. To a Jew applying for baptism you would put the question, "Dost thou believe that Jesus is the Messiah?" and to a Gentile, "Dost thou believe that Jesus is the Son of God?"

3dly. There is another sun of saving knowledge mentioned (1 John iv. 1—3), which may be stated in the words, "Jesus is come in the flesh." This is the form of sound words which we hold fast against the spirits of deception, false prophets, and antichrist, whose constant aim is to nullify the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Devils will never confess Jesus Christ come in the flesh, for his coming was to destroy their works (1 John iii. 8). The Gnostics and false prophets of the first

ages laboured hard to overturn the doctrine of the real humanity of Christ; and what is the object of the entire system of anti-christ—his mass, his purgatory, his angel-worship, his Mariolatry, his saint-worship, image-worship, his pilgrimages, jubilees, and lying wonders—what do they all tend to but the denying that Jesus is come in the flesh? He has not really done the work: we, the priests, will do it. This is the substance of the antichristian system, and against it, as a shield, the believer should hold fast the confession that Jesus is come in the flesh.”

II. But *the believer's relation to God* is another truth asserted in the first verse—“And every one that loveth Him that begat, loveth Him also that is begotten of Him.” From this we learn, 1st. That the believing followers of the Saviour are adopted into the family of God; so that they can call Him their Father, and approach Him, at all times, as his dear children, with holy reverence and fear, knowing that, having given his dear Son for them, He will withhold nothing else (Rom. viii. 32). 2dly. That love to God is necessarily connected with love to the brethren. It is vain to talk of loving the Father in heaven, while we neglect, despise, and hate the children on earth. “He that loveth the father,” says the apostle, “loveth the child also; for the quality of a child is to grow up in the image and likeness of the father.” But this idea of the Father and the family being so intimately related to one another is very precious and consolatory to the church of God. In our loving the Father we love the family, and in our loving the family we love the Father also. We observe, here, that there is no intimation of the *diversities* of the family, which, in other passages, are very distinctly noticed. They are *all* begotten of the Father; and it is this quality which unites them all with Him, however diversified in other respects, and makes them the objects of the love of all them that love the Father.



III. *But how do we know that we love the children of God?*

This is answered in the second verse, which gives us two infallible proofs of this brotherly love: 1st. By loving God. So closely are the children united to the Father, and so fully is the Father's image impressed upon them, that, in the assurance of your love to Him, you have the assurance of your love to them. So impossible is it, in the apostle's mind, to love God, and not love or despise the children of God, that he makes the former the ground or foundation of the latter. Hear it, then, ye pretenders to the extatic, rapturous emotions of divine love, and who yet consider not the wants and the weaknesses of your brethren on the earth, all your extacies are delusions of the flesh, or of the devil, and will not stand the fire-proof of the righteous judgment of God. The love of God is not a feeble, slumberous emotion, like the ideal enchantment of an opium-eater, which evaporates in the indistinctness of a pleasurable excitement; but a strong, impulsive, heart-current, which flows forth in streams of benevolence—in works of faith, and labours of love—to all that are within its reach. The feeling that would drive you to caves of the desert for solitary communion with God, or to the tops of the mountains, far away from the habitations and corruptions of men, is not a genuine, but a spurious emotion, which has nothing in common with the love of God required in the Bible, and is opposed to the practice of the Saviour and his apostles. Where such love is genuine it will be manifested in love to the brethren, in feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the prisons of the wretched, and pouring the balm of consolation into bleeding and broken hearts. Your love may be an extacy, indeed; but if it be real love to your Father in heaven it will break, like the sun-lit cloud of April, in showers of blessings upon the children of God. 2dly. We know that we love the children of God by keeping his commandments. We must come to facts, and manifest the reality of our union with God, of regeneration, and love to our Maker and our brethren, by the tangible, un-ideal,



and daily work of keeping the commandments of God. His authority must constrain and control our actions, our thoughts, our deepest desires, and regulate the current of our life. If the ambitions of earthly splendour should lead your hearts from the cross of Christ; if the love of present things should dethrone the adorable Redeemer in the sanctuary of your breast; if the lusts of the flesh be cherished, nurtured, and pampered, instead of being resisted and crucified; if, in one word, you are knowingly neglecting or violating the commandments of God, it is in vain for you to talk of loving God, or the children of God. The tree is known by its fruits, the will is proved by the act, and the saying by the doing,

IV. *ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ Θεοῦ*. This leads the apostle to the proof of the love of God generally; saying (verse 3), "This is the love of God, that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." Here the first thing that is taught us is, 1st. That there is a living, active, personal God, who is interested in his creatures, and desires and requires their love. He is not the abstract, somnolent, indifferent deity of the idealists, rationalists, and semi-panteists, who, like the Indian Brahmans, have made a god after their own imagination, but the Creator, Redeemer, and Lord of the worlds, who notices the sparrow as it falls, numbers the hairs of our heads, and, ever busy, wheels the silent spheres. He is a holy, loving God; and He seeks our love. 2dly. We are taught that this love is possible, and we are bound to give it. The unrepealed commandment is still over us, in all its requirements, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and thy neighbour as thyself:" and, blessed be his name, the incarnation, atonement, and mediation of his Son have made it easy, by throwing around the character of the Lawgiver and Judge the attractions of a loving and sin-forgiving Father. It is possible to love God; or rather, I would say, it is impossible, as seen in the person of Jesus, the Mediator and Redeemer, not to love

Him. He has tempered his majesty with tenderness, and for thee. The High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity speaks to thee, and his words are mercy and love. He gave his Son to die for thee, and his hand, his heaven, and his heart, are open for thee. Oh, was there ever such a scene as the cross of Calvary? and He thought of thee then and there, when the sky was dark, and his Son on the bleeding tree. Oh, dost thou not feel thy heart drawn out to the kind and loving God, who has done such things for thee? 3dly. This love to Him, if you have it, will lead you to keep his commandments; for, without this, all professions are vain and contradictory. This takes for granted that you know his commandments, that He has made known his will to mankind in the Scriptures of truth; so that the fountain from which you draw your knowledge of God is no other than the Bible. He has given you this advantage over millions of your fellow-creatures, that you have the Holy Scriptures within your reach, which are able to make wise unto salvation. You read his mind, not in the indistinct pages of the material creation, or the still darker lines of your own consciousness, like the heathen nations, but in the sunlight of the Gospel of his well-beloved Son. Hence you are the more responsible for keeping his commandments. 4thly. Lastly, the apostle assures us his commandments are not grievous. This refers to the contrast between the Gospel and the former dispensation, and teaches us that the burdens which the fathers were unable to bear have been removed in the new dispensation of grace. The ritual service is abolished; annual pilgrimages to an earthly centre, like Jerusalem and Mecca, are no longer required; and the redeemed church is lifted out of the bondage of legal ceremonialism into the liberty of the children of God. The sum and substance of his commandments is love; and love, to the loving, is never grievous. Even in cases where duty requires the Christian to give up all for Christ the commandment is not so grievous as might, at first sight, appear. There is no cloud without its rainbow, and

no duty without its corresponding promise. We may be despoiled of our goods, like the first Christians; thrown into dungeons, like the saints of God under the papacy; but this prepares us for the better land and the heavenly inheritance. The cross-bearers on earth shall soon become the palm-bearing company in the heavenly Jerusalem: and we should never forget, that, in all our trials and afflictions, He who loved us and died for us is present with us, as a very present help in time of trouble. This lightens the burden of the cross, and makes his yoke easy to the weary and heavy-laden who follow Him. The loving, obedient heart will say, in the heat of the battle, or in persecutions and perils of the cross, his commandments are not grievous: they are the commandments of divine wisdom and heavenly love.

V. ἡ νίκη—ἡ πίστις, *the victory of faith*. This is the substance of the 4th and 5th verses. The ὅτι, *for*, of the 4th verse, shews the connection to be this: “The love of God, and the keeping of his commandments, are possible, but this cannot be done without faith; and his commandments are not burdensome, because whosoever is born of God overcometh the world.” This world-conquering faith makes the commandments of God easy, and his burdens light. The commandments are indeed difficult, and even impossible for those who are entangled in the world, for those who are not born of God; but for the sincere and humble Christian, who is born from above, and in whom the spirit of love dwells, the commandments of God are not grievous. The term  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\ \tau\acute{o}$  occurs often for  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \acute{o}$ , or  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\varsigma\ \acute{o}\varsigma$ , but seems to be a stronger assertion; just as our “*whatsoever* is born of God” is a stronger and more absolute expression than “*whosoever* is born of God overcometh the world.” The neuter and the masculine  $\pi\acute{\alpha}\nu\ \acute{o}$  are joined together in Rom. xiv. 43. John vi. 37, 39: xvii. 2; but the meaning is the same. We may gather the full sense of the passage from the following assertions and facts—

1st. All true Christians are *born of God*. This is asserted and repeated again and again, and in all possible varieties of expression and connection (John i. 13. 1 John iii. 9. iv. 7. v. 1, 4, 18). This is symbolized by the baptism of water (John iii. 5). Sometimes this regeneration is attributed to the Holy Ghost, as his special work in the economy of redemption (John iii. 5, 8. Acts ii. 38. Tit. iii. 5); and, contemplated from the side of human responsibility, it is often connected with faith (John i. 12. Gal. iii. 26). What, then, is the meaning of this oft-repeated assertion, that "believers are born of God?" It means, that they receive a new life from God, by which they are incorporated into his family, and enabled to do his will. This is the turning-point of their existence. They were the children of the world and the devil; they are now the children of God: their desires, hopes, fears, and enjoyments are all new; they are converted, regenerated, washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of their God: old things have passed away, and all things are become new. In one word, they are Christians indeed, in whom is no guile, and their home is in the many-mansioned house in the heavens.

2dly. The work of the regenerated is to *overcome the world*. Κόσμος, "world," is, in this passage, the same as the **הָעוֹלָם הַזֶּה** of the Hebrews, which means the present corrupt and deceitful state of things, as opposed to the world to come, where righteousness and peace shall fill the land. It is the *ὁ αἰὼν οὗτος* (John xii. 25), this present evil age, or world, from whose power and dominion Jesus came to deliver (Gal. i. 4). Indeed, *αἰὼν* and *κόσμος* are, in Scripture, often used in the same sense, though they are specially distinguished in Eph. ii. 2. The meaning is this: the present system of things, the physical and moral world, the constitution of man, and the whole social and civil condition of human society, are lying under the curse of sin and the dominion of the wicked one. You were born in this system, and formed a part of the sin and



death-possessed whole. By regeneration ye are brought out of it, and empowered by the spirit of the risen God-man, the Conqueror, to resist it, and triumph over it, and thereby shew yourselves worthy members of a higher world, the **הַעוֹלָם הַבָּא** of the Hebrews, the age of the kingdom and coming of the Son of Man (Luke xx. 34, 35; here the two *aiōn*'s are contrasted), of which so much is spoken in the Holy Scriptures. The world, therefore, is the enemy of our souls; and the more we are, in spirit, opposed to its maxims and delusions, the more fitted we are for the heavenly inheritance. He that is born of God overcometh the world. If you are thinking nothing about the world, but yielding to its seductions, and swimming down on the current of its seductions, we must conclude, with the apostle John, that you are not born of God.

3dly. And if you ask, "By what means do we obtain this victory over the world?" the apostle answers, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our *faith*." This is the victorious, world-renouncing, all-conquering faith, which breathed and burned in the apostolic churches, and which has left such imperishable memorials of its triumphs in the records of the Christian church. The vigour of faith, and the certainty of its victory, lies, not in the act of the believing mind, nor in the mode of believing, but in the *object* believed on. It is not the hand which the believing soul stretches out, but the gift which it receives, which ennobles and glorifies the recipients. This grace, love, power, and goodness, the whole fulness of the treasures of the Godhead in the person of the risen God-man, are freely put at the disposal of every man, freely and sincerely offered to the world by a loving, faithful God, and *faith* makes them ours, appropriates them to our need, and uses them for our strength, comfort, and defence in the pilgrimage and battle of life. Hence, the position of the believer is a heavenly one, and is so described in the Bible. He is *in* Christ, in God the Father, and in the Holy Spirit, so that he drinks in the streams of a pure and imperishable life; a life,

not from God, but a life *out of God*, the very manifested life of God in Christ. From this position of safety, of peace, and impregnable strength, he surveys all the changes, turmoils, and commotions of the world. He may be said, in a figurative sense, to see with God's eyes, and look and long over the perishing world of sinners with the longings of the heart of God. He is, in all respects, identified, both here and hereafter, with the divine Redeemer; so that neither death, nor life, nor the changes of time, nor the storms of eternity, can separate them from one another (Rom. viii. 35). He has, in a certain measure, passed through the same conditions of being here on earth, and the promises are numerous which assure us that the saint and the Saviour shall be glorified together (Rom. vii. 5). We are, as believers, regenerated in his generation, and by the same Holy Ghost; we are baptized in his baptism of fire; we are living the life of the Son of God in the flesh; we are crucified with Him on Calvary; buried with Him in the tomb of Joseph; raised in his resurrection to newness of life; and seated with Him in the heavenly throne. Faith realizes and appropriates all the promised blessings of the new covenant: it makes the future present, brings the distant near, despises mere appearances, surmounts all obstacles, defies and triumphs over fire and water, prisons, persecutions, and death; for it contemplates and realizes all things in the light and truth of God. Well might the apostle say, with emphatic conciseness, "This is the victory that overcometh the world, ἡ πίστις ἡμῶν, our faith."

"Devota sanctorum fides,  
Invicta spes credentium,  
Perfecta Christi caritas,  
Mundi triumphat principem."

4thly. *But what faith are you speaking of?* is the question which was undoubtedly in the apostle's mind as being put to him, and the fifth verse is the answer which he gives, limiting

and determining more exactly the general statement of the fourth verse ; and to make the assertion more strong and emphatic he puts it in the form of a question, thus, “ Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God ? ” We have already repeatedly discussed, more or less fully, the primitive confession of the church’s faith—“ Jesus is the Son of God ; ” and, as the apostle repeats it, we shall elucidate it a little further : (1) There are four forms of the statement of it conceivable in the Greek language, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, the most common form, υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, υἱὸς Θεοῦ, and ὁ υἱὸς Θεοῦ, which last form, if it be admissible in the Greek language, certainly does not occur in the New Testament. Our English phrase, therefore, “ the Son of God,” is the translation of three Greek phrases, whose various significations, if they be various, cannot be expressed in our language. The common, usual form, ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ, occurs in the following passages : Matt. xvi. 16. xxvi. 63. Mark iii. 11. xiv. 61. Luke iv. 9, 41. xxii. 70. John i. 34, 50. vi. 69. xi. 4, 27. xx. 31. Acts viii. 37. ix. 20. Eph. iv. 13. Heb. iv. 14. vi. 6. x. 29. 1 John iii. 8. iv. 15. v. 10, 12, 13, 20. Rev. i. 18. The form υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ in the following : Matt. iv. 3 (here εἶ occurs between υἱὸς and τοῦ Θεοῦ) ; Mark i. 1 (here υἱὸς is preceded by the words Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, which define it sufficiently) ; xv. 39 (here ᾧ occurs between υἱὸς and τοῦ Θεοῦ) ; John x. 36 (here the sentence is inverted, the verb being put last) ; 2 Cor. i. 19 (here the genitive τοῦ Θεοῦ is put first, and the following υἱὸς defined by Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). These are all the passages where this form is found in the New Testament. The third form, υἱὸς Θεοῦ, where both are without the article, occurs in the following : Matt. xiv. 33 (here the genitive, Θεοῦ, is placed first) ; xxvii. 43 (here Θεοῦ is first, and εἰμὶ comes before υἱὸς) ; 54 (here, too, Θεοῦ is before the governing υἱὸς, and the verb is at the end) ; Luke i. 32, 35 (here υἱὸς is the humanity, τὸ γεννώμενον), John xix. 7. We observe, on this usage, that the three forms denote essentially the same thing, though, in certain con-

structions, one form may be more according to the analogy of the Greek language than the others. Where the sentence is a clear, direct statement of the fact of his Sonship, the common and proper form is  $\acute{o} \nu\iota\delta\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ , and both have the article. Where the sentence is involved, where words are thrown in between  $\nu\iota\delta\varsigma$  and  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon$ , or where the  $\nu\iota\delta\varsigma$  is limited and defined by other words set in opposition to it, the article *may* be dropped; but to retain it in every one of them would neither render the passages unintelligible nor destroy the purity of the Greek. On the other hand, in John xix. 7, neither  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  nor  $\nu\iota\delta\varsigma$  has the article; and yet the Jews charged the Saviour with blasphemy against God because He made Himself the Son of God. On the whole, we may fairly conclude that custom varies very much in the use of the article in Greek. In most modern languages, when the genitive precedes the governing noun, that noun cannot have the article. Thus we say, "the Son of God," but we say "God's Son;" so the Germans say, "der Sohn Gottes," but "Gottes Sohn;" and there are traces of this usage in the Greek (2 Cor. i. 19), though they may use the article in both cases if they choose. (2) As to the nature of this Sonship, we may distinguish three kinds mentioned in the Scripture. He is the eternal Son, begotten without a beginning, the ineffable image of the Father; the brightness of his glory, and the express character of his person (Heb. i. 3). Hence the love of God to mankind is expressed in the great fact that God sent his Son to be our Saviour. He did not send Him to *become* a Son, but He sent Him who was the Son to become our kinsman Redeemer (John iii. 16). This was the faith of the church from the beginning, and it is clearly the doctrine of the New Testament; nor is this eternal Sonship a vain theological speculation, but a practical Christian doctrine, for it is the basis of the eternal election of the saints unto the adoption of sons (Eph. i. 3—6). We are chosen, redeemed, and glorified in the beloved Son. Again, He is the Son of God, as the Incarnate One, born of the Holy Ghost



(Luke i. 35), and as such He is the Head of the regenerated ones, who receive their new birth and spiritual life out of his fulness. Hence He is really and truly the Head of the redeemed, sanctified humanity, the elder Brother of the family of God, in whom all the members of his body have holiness, union, and strength. But He is the Man of Resurrection, also, the first who rose from the dead in our glorified and immortalized nature (Acts xxvi. 23. 1 Cor. xv. 20. Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5), the first-begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the kings of the earth. In this way, also, as the first-begotten from the grave, He is related to his church, for He is the first-fruits of them that sleep, the first ripe sheaf that has been gathered into the garner of God, and the pledge and assurance to us, that, in God's good time, the whole harvest shall be brought home. Hence his second coming is connected with the resurrection of his saints, and never with the resurrection of the wicked (1 Cor. xv. 23. 1 Thess. iv. 13—18). He is the first-fruits of the harvest, the earnest of the inheritance, and the first-born of the family of God. This connects the believer with Jesus the living Head in a threefold manner: he is eternally elected in the Eternal Son; he is quickened by the Spirit in the Incarnate Son; and he has the hope of the kingdom, and the inheritance, and the divine glory in Him, as the first-begotten from the dead. Thus election, regeneration, and resurrection have their form and basis in his threefold Sonship.

(3) We may well ask ourselves the question suggested by the apostle in our passage, "Have we this world-conquering faith?" The question is practical, and cannot be left unanswered without guilt and ruin to our own souls. We know our enemies, and we know the means of opposing and triumphing over them, yet we remain indifferent. That you can serve the world here, and then enjoy the glory of Jehovah hereafter, is one of the most foul and fatal delusions of the deceived, fallen heart. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb. xi. 6); and without faith in the Son of God it is impossible

either to overcome the world, or crucify the flesh, or resist the temptations of the devil. Be assured then, brother, if thou wouldst enter the kingdom, there is nothing for thee but faith; no other means of safety and triumph that God has made known to us; no other hand that can seize and hold the anchor of hope which the Divine Promiser throws out to us in this stormy life; no other power on earth that can bind the soul to the Son of God, and make her victorious over all her enemies in time and eternity. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou *shalt be saved*. It is the glorious utterance of the faithful Creator, and none has ever found it vain. Jesus is the Son of God, the strong and mighty deliverer, in whom the weak may find strength, the afflicted consolation, and the weary a home; and faith is the bond that unites you with Him, and draws out of his fulness whatever your necessities may require.

“ ’Tis faith that changes all the heart,  
 ’Tis faith that works by love,  
 That bids all sinful joys depart,  
 And lifts the thoughts above.

’Tis faith that conquers earth and hell,<sup>†</sup>  
 By a celestial power;  
 This is the grace that shall prevail  
 In the decisive hour.

Faith must obey her Father’s will,  
 As well as trust his grace;  
 A pardoning God is jealous still  
 For all his holiness.”

VI. *The mode of Christ’s coming; the witnesses.* This is the general subject contained in our passage from the 6th to the end of the 12th verse, and to it we now direct our attention. The *οἶτος* refers to Jesus in the fifth verse, and is set in opposition to Jesus the Christ; thus, “This is He that came by water and blood, Jesus the Christ,” viz. Jesus who is the

Christ ; for in such cases, ὁ Χριστός, having the article, must be considered as a predicate (ii. 22. v. 1). Some resolve the sentence thus, "This is Jesus Christ who came by water and blood;" but this both weakens the strength of the passage, and perverts the simplicity of John's style and construction.

1st. How did Jesus Christ come by water, δι' ὕδατος? He came by water as the Sanctifier and Purifier of the nations. This is the symbolical signification of water both in the Old and New Testament (Is. lv. 1. xii. 3. xxxv. 6, 7. John vi. 37, 38). Jesus is the source or fountain-head from whence all healing waters flow. He is the rock in the wilderness from which the weary pilgrim drinks, and is satisfied, like the Israelites in the days of old. All the ancient types and ceremonies, which had their significancy in the cleansing of water, have been united and fulfilled. His public ministry was opened among the Jews by the solemn ordinance of baptism in the Jordan, by which He became the First of the Baptized, in order afterwards to become, in the way of righteousness, the Baptizer with the Holy Ghost and with fire. John's baptism was a great public testimony to the Messiahship of Jesus Christ, so that, as the public man and miraculous minister, He entered upon his mediatorial office by water, with the sanction of the heavenly Voice and the descending Dove (Matt. iii. 16, 17). Then again, He has founded, and left with his church, the ordinance of Christian baptism, which, as Leland has well proved, is one of the most undeniable testimonies to the coming and work of the Redeemer. Thus He is not only the Baptized but the Baptizer also ; not the recipient of gifts merely, but the dispenser of the treasures of God also ; not the ender of the old dispensation merely, which, in John's baptism, drew to a close, but the head of a new dispensation, in which He Himself is the glorious fountain-head of fulness for a weary and thirsty world. From Him, therefore, the weary church and the thirsty creation may draw the waters of refreshing which can make glad the city of God. He is the risen centre of these pentecostal streams

of refreshing (well typified by the dew, and the rain, and the rivers of water), which, from his heavenly throne, He sheds down both on the church and the world.

2dly. *By blood.* He came not only by water, but also by blood. His object was not simply to purify, but also to redeem; not to dispense the gifts of righteousness merely, but also to work out a righteousness in which the believer might find shelter and covering in the day of vengeance. Flesh and blood (σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα) denote the human nature in its weak, mortal, fallen condition (Matt. xvi. 17. 1 Cor. xv. 50. Gal. i. 16. Eph. vi. 12. Heb. ii. 14); and Jesus Christ, the Son of God, on whom we are to believe to the remission of sins, took upon Himself flesh and blood the same as the brethren (Heb. ii. 14), that He might destroy death, and him that has the power of death, viz. the devil. Blood often signifies the entire man, the human nature (Matt. xxvi. 4. Lev. xix. 16), and hence some have thought that his coming δι' αἵματος, "through blood," is the same as (1 Tim. iii. 16) Θεὸς ἐφανερώθη ἐν σαρκί, "God was manifested in the flesh." But this, though bearing on the passage as a necessary preliminary for his coming by water and blood, in the sense of 1 John v. 6, is certainly not the direct and natural meaning of the text. His coming by blood, in our text, refers to his atoning death on the cross, where his blood was shed for the remission of sins to all that believe. The atonement is in the blood (Lev. xvii. 11. Heb. ix. 22); and Jesus the Redeemer, by the shedding of his precious blood, has fulfilled the law, made an end of sin, and brought in everlasting righteousness. This seems to be the meaning of his coming by blood (δι' αἵματος), and this opinion is strengthened by the repetition of the same sentiment, but in an altered form, not by water only, but by blood (ἐν τῷ αἵματι), where ἐν being used for the διὰ of the first clause, and the article being added to both ἰδῶρ and αἷμα, the more natural translation would be, "Not with the water only, but with the water and the blood," and so De Wette and others have translated it; which may be



paraphrased thus, "He came not in the way of the baptism by water only, but also in the way of redemption, the blood-besprinkled way of atoning love." But, leaving criticism and diversities of sentiment, let us seize the great prominent truth which lies on the very surface of the passage, which is, that Jesus is the atoning Lamb slain for the sins of his people. To Him belongs the baptismal purification, and also the sprinkling of blood. He sanctifies and He justifies; He prepares the bride for her future glory, and He opens up the way to the holiest of all. He is the glorious fountain both of sanctifying and redeeming love. He came by water and blood; water and blood flowed from his wounded side; and two streams of sanctifying water and justifying blood are still shedding their divine blessings over the world. The twofold truth which the verse unfolds is this, that Jesus, the Son of God, is both the Sanctifier and the Justifier of sinners; and, consequently, that wherever in the wide world purity and pardon are needed, they are to be sought and found in Him. In the laver of a Saviour's regenerating grace we are purified from the defilements of the flesh and the mind; and in the fountain of his justifying blood, freely shed for the sins of many, we receive the pardon of our sins and acceptance with God. Water and blood are the symbols of the two mighty systems of which his adorable person is the centre, and by which the church, in spite of all impediments and enemies, is brought into the possession of the heavenly inheritance. Surely this is nothing less than divine love, and the responsibility of rejecting it must be awful. May we ever, dear brother, draw near to this High Priest of our profession, where such blessings, for time and for eternity, are to be found! His peace and his pardoning mercy are free to us both—to thee, the reader, and me, the writer of these lines; and, if not now, the time is certainly coming when we shall both feel his help very precious. Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry. He came by water and by blood, and He is coming again in flaming fire.

Be ye always ready, for at such a time as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.

3dly. *The Witness of the Spirit* concludes the sixth verse—“And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, for the Spirit is truth.” How does the Spirit bear witness to Christ? In many ways, of which I shall mention the following. (1) The Holy Spirit bore witness to the Son of God in the person of the Redeemer himself, for He was generated by the power of the Holy Ghost (Luke i. 35); He was led and guided by the Holy Spirit in his whole life of humiliation and self-denial (Matt. iv. 1. Luke iv. 1); He wrought his miracles in the power of the Holy Spirit (Matt. xii. 28); the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove when He was baptized (Matt. iii. 16); He was raised from the dead by the agency of the Holy Spirit (1 Pet. iii. 18; compare 1 Tim. iii. 16); and after his resurrection He was filled with the immeasurable plenitude of the Holy Ghost, whereby He became the head of the new dispensation, from whom all the needy creatures of God are to receive the divine mercy and goodness for evermore. But (2) the Holy Spirit bore witness to the Redeemer, and specially to his death and resurrection, in the *χάρισματά* (2 Cor. i. 11. 1 Cor. vii. 7. Rom. i. 11. xii. 6. 1 Cor. xii. 4, 9, 28, 30, 31. 1 Pet. iv. 10), or miraculous spiritual endowment of the church, whereby, from the day of Pentecost to the present time, she has been enabled, sometimes with greater and sometimes with less power, to bear witness to the resurrection and glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no testimony so noble and convincing, none so overpowering to the convictions of men, or so unassailable by the infidel, as a church walking in the ways of the Lord and filled with all the fruits of righteousness; and such a church is the work of the Holy Ghost. He built the house, and He inhabits it; He formed the temple, and He is worshipped therein. (3) The Holy Ghost bears witness to the Redeemer by the prophecies which are fulfilled and fulfilling in Him; and hence it is written, “The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of

prophecy" (Rev. xix. 10). The Holy Ghost is the divine inspirer, and hence all holy Scripture is *θεόπνευστος* (2 Tim. iii. 16), inspired of God, for "holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. i. 21). So, then, the Holy Spirit bears testimony to the Lord Jesus in his own person and work, in the persons and works of the redeemed church, and in the great system of providence and prophecy. The apostle might, therefore, well say, "And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth."

4thly. *The three Witnesses* are mentioned, in the seventh and eighth verses, thus, "For there are three that bear record (in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one; and there are three that bear witness in earth, *ἐν τῇ οὐρανῷ ὁ Πατὴρ, ὁ Λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον Πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι. Καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῇ*) "the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one." The words included in the parenthesis form the celebrated text of the heavenly witnesses which has been the subject of such fierce and bitter discussion. I do not intend to give a statement of the argument on either side, but having read all I could get at on the subject, both in English and German, I may be permitted to state simply my convictions. (1) Nothing can be proved out of the *internal* evidence either for or against its genuineness. The passage seems to be full and perfect without these words, and yet, when inserted, the meaning is scriptural and apostolical. The apostle *might* have written them, for they contain nothing which cannot be proved from other passages of sacred Scripture, and therefore I altogether disagree with the dogmatism and presumption of Lücke, who says, "Either these words are spurious, and the rest of the epistle a genuine production of John, or they are genuine, and the epistle belongs to a much later period." (2) There is not sufficient ground for retaining these words in the sacred text. The evidence, so far as it is known or examined, is entirely against their genuineness, and therefore our jealous veneration for the word of God should

make us reject them, at least until new confirmatory evidence be produced. What, then, is the meaning of the passage? It is this, There are three witnesses to the sonship, or Messiahship, of Jesus—three standing, perpetual memorials and monuments to the truth of the Christian religion, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, viz. the Holy Ghost, the baptized church, and the redeemed world; and these three agree in one, that Jesus is the only but all-sufficient Saviour of the world. We have already considered the testimony of the Spirit, and need not repeat it here. The ordinance of baptism, which He instituted, is also a standing memorial of his truth, in which we are reminded of his own baptism, with all its accompanying evidences; of his command to disciple the nations in the name of the blessed Trinity; and of the promise of his perpetual presence. His blood, his death on calvary, his atoning love, is a testimony to the truth and reality of his Messiahship; and its blessings, sealed and made over to the believer in the ordinance of the last supper, are the evidence, in all ages and nations, of his unspeakable love to mankind. Thus we have the Holy Ghost, with his signs, wonders, and manifold operations, bearing testimony to the Son of God; we have the water of baptism adding its testimony to the baptism of fire; and we have the blood of Christ, which speaketh better things than that of Abel, joining the other two in proclaiming the fulness and completeness of the work of redeeming love.

“ ’Tis finished; the Messiah dies  
For sins, but not his own;  
The great redemption is complete,  
And Satan’s power o’erthrown.

’Tis finished; legal worship ends,  
And gospel ages run;  
All old things now are past away,  
And a new world begun.”

5thly. *The certainty of the Gospel truth* is argued in the ninth



verse, on the ground that the testimony of God is more worthy of credit than the testimony of man. "If we receive the witness (*ἡ μαρτυρία*) of men, the witness of God is greater;" but God hath borne witness to the Messiahship and Sonship of Jesus, and therefore we have every reason to believe them to be true. But how has God given testimony to his Son? In many ways, and at different times. He prepared and arranged the former dispensations of the church and the world to be a gradual introduction to the age of the Messiah; He raised up prophets and wise men, in different ages, to announce the advent of the coming deliverer, in whom the Jew and the Gentile were to be united under one head, in one body, for ever; He testified to the coming of the Son of God by a fore-ordained system of types and shadows, ceremonies and sacrifices, which pointed the eye of faith and hope to the coming King, in whom the longings of the creation were to be satisfied. When He came, God bore testimony to Him by the ministry of *angels*, who appeared at his conception (Matt. i. 20), at his birth (Luke ii. 13), at his temptation (Matt. iv. 1—11), at his agony in the garden (Luke xxii. 43), at his resurrection (Matt. xxviii. 2), and at his ascension from Mount Olivet (Acts i. 8—12). He testified to his Son by the signs, and wonders, and manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit, which, through Him, He gave to the apostles and the apostolic church. He bore testimony to Him on the holy mount (Matt. xvii. 5), and at his baptism (Matt. iii. 17), by his own fatherly voice from heaven, announcing and accrediting Him as his only-begotten and well-beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. And, finally, He testified to the Son by raising Him from the dead and elevating Him to the throne of universal dominion as God-man and Mediator, so that every creature in heaven and on earth should bow the knee in his name (*ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι*), and every tongue confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 8—18). This mighty act of Jehovah in glorifying his Son is the public and universal testimony of the Creator to the cha-

racter and faithfulness of the divine Redeemer. All these give the soul a sure basis on which to rest her hopes in looking forward to the issues of eternity. When we put full confidence for time and eternity in Christ and his finished work, we are not building on the sand of man's traditions and delusions, but upon the Rock of ages, the sure foundation which the Lord hath laid in Zion. There is no room for doubt. The facts of the gospel history on which the Christian system is built are more firmly established than any other events in the history of mankind. We have, for example, much greater evidence that Jesus rose from the dead than that Julius Cæsar was murdered in the Roman Senate, or that Napoleon was defeated at Waterloo. If we believe the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, and this greater witness He has given concerning his Son. He cannot err, and He will not deceive. His wisdom, power, goodness, and love are the sure guarantees which He gives us that he that believeth on his Son shall never be confounded. Certain manuscripts have  $\sigma\tau\iota$  for  $\eta\nu$  in this verse, but the reading of the text is better certified, and gives a better sense, notwithstanding what Lücke says to the contrary. Griesbach puts them on the same level, but prefers retaining  $\eta\nu$ .

6thly. *The Inward Witness.* "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." This may mean, "He that believeth hath the witness-bearer in himself," and in this sense it is parallel with that other text, "For the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God" (Rom. viii. 16). In the very act of believing he has the evidence of the presence of the witness-bearer. This seems to be different from the testimony given by the fruits of the Spirit and the works of a righteous life, for it is not said the Spirit bears witness *through* our spirit, but *with* our spirit, that we are the children of God. He dwells in the believing heart as the spirit of adoption, and leads us to cry Abba, Father. We have the *evidence* (for witness may have that meaning) in ourselves, and need no confirmation from external sources: his indwelling presence sheds

the love of God abroad in our hearts, and makes us rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. It is natural that, where the felt presence of our God is, there should be love, joy, peace, and much assurance. The sinner and the Saviour have met in the moment of faith, in the act of receiving the testimony of Jehovah's love into the mind, and out of that union springs the life of love and faith, of flesh-crucifixion and world-renunciation, of earnest labour for the Lord, and of immortal hope. The heart is the chosen circle where divine love manifests its various fulness and beauty, where the evidences of our peace and acceptance with God are written in lines of ineffaceable clearness, where the turbulent emotions of our fallen nature have been stilled and subdued by the Saviour's hand. He that believeth hath the witness in himself. It is not in heaven, that we should bring it down, nor in the deep, that we should bring it up from thence, but the word is nigh unto us, even the word of faith which we preach. The fruits of good living may confirm and strengthen this inward witness in our souls, but it is not necessary to the certainty of our convictions. The inward testimony is for ourselves, and the outward is for the neighbour. The felt peace within sheds forth its influence on the life and conversation in many ways, in love to the brethren, in a peace-loving demeanour, in holy conversation and heavenly prayers. Life is its own evidence, and the living one needs no proofs that he is alive, though sometimes, as in sleep, or in a swoon, the external evidence may be mostly wanting, and the friends and neighbours may be in doubt for some time. But this cannot continue long: the struggle will soon be decided, and the external proofs, either for life or death, will be complete and perfect. Even so the inward witness of God's Spirit in our hearts, always sufficient for the believer, will, though weakened and oppressed for a time, speedily break forth, like the trees in summer, in all the fruits of righteousness; so that others, seeing his good works, may glorify their Father who is in heaven. On the contrary, the apostle assures us that "he that believeth

not God hath made Him a liar (treated Him as a liar), because he hath not believed (*πεπίστευκεν*) the record that God hath given of his Son." The guilt of unbelief consists in this, that it treats the testimony of God as being unworthy of credit, and consequently that God, who gave it, is no better than a liar. All the mighty acts of God's faithful testimony are treated as lies of men or delusions of the devil. The incarnation, the resurrection, the ascension to heaven, and the advent of the Holy Ghost the Sanctifier, though accredited by God himself, are treated as fictions and delusions. This is fearful guilt, and must draw after it a fearful punishment; for in proportion as the evidence is clear and unimpeachable, in the same degree must the rejection of it be heinous in the sight of God. When we think of the nature of the divine testimony given to confirm the gospel of Christ; when we think of the prophecies which were fulfilled in Him, the miracles which were done by Him, the purity, nobility, and worthiness of the doctrines which He promulgated among the nations, the wonderful dignity and grandeur of his own character, the number of good men who, in the first ages, laid down their lives for his name, the rapidity with which the doctrine of the cross subdued continents, nations, and kingdoms; I say, when we think of all this, and the other testimonies which confirm and establish our faith, we may well say with the apostle in our text, "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar," and elsewhere, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on Him" (John iii. 36). Let us, then, cherish the spirit of faith, and long daily for a fuller effusion of his presence that we may realize the assertion of our text, "He that believeth hath the witness in himself."

"Who, then, shall e'er divide us more  
From Jesus and his love;  
Or break the sacred chain that binds  
The earth to heaven above?



Nor death, nor life, nor earth, nor hell,  
 Nor time's destroying sway,  
 Can e'er efface us from his heart,  
 Or make his love decay."

7thly. ἡ μαρτυρία, *The Record*. What, then, is the sum and substance of all the testimonies of God as revealed to mankind in the gospel of the Saviour? Hear what the beloved apostle says, "This is the record, that God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." From this record we learn much of the nature of the gospel. The GIVER is God. He is the source and fountain from which all the gifts of providence and grace flow. The Creator and the creature come directly into contact in the reception of the divine favour. He gave his Son, He gives his Spirit, and from Him eternal life flows. On no other terms could we receive, and on none other could He dispense, his blessings. If salvation be intended really for our benefit, it must be free, otherwise it is of no use. Hence the attitude which God assumes in the gospel dispensation is that of a sin-pardoning Father seated on a throne of grace, and freely dispensing his blessings to the nations. The GIFT is eternal life. This is the splendid gift which the God of heaven reaches down to every man from his throne on high, inviting, commanding, and entreating us all to receive it from his hand. It is a gift worthy of God, for it contains pardon and peace here, and the full and blissful enjoyment of the divine glory hereafter. It is, as opposed to the punishment and death consequent upon sin, a gift of *life*; and as opposed to the transient, perishable enjoyments of this world, it is *eternal* life. The full beatific vision of the ineffable Jehovah, into which the ransomed shall enter at the coming of the Lord, is called eternal life (Matt. xxv. 46); nor does our language contain any term more expressive of the enjoyments of the upper sanctuary. This, then, is his gift, and it is given, brother man, to thee. It is thine; only believe it! It is there for the taking up; it is lying under your hand. O! why dost thou not take it up?

Be not afraid; only believe! The very God of peace and love gives it thee, and his heart towards thee is a father's heart, and He seeks to draw thee and me, weary prodigals both, to his loving, tender breast. Come, O come, man and brother, let us arise and go to our Father, for with Him there is bread enough and to spare. Remember, it is *given*, not *offered*, and if you do not take it, you are trampling it under your feet. But this gift of life is in HIS SON. For as there is one God, the Father, *from* whom (ἐξ οὗ) are all things, so there is one Mediator, *through* whom (δι' οὗ) we receive all the gifts, both of providence and grace. The unity of the Mediator is as certain and essential to the Christian system as the unity of God (1 Cor. viii. 6). In our text the Saviour is not contemplated as the medium simply through which the heavenly grace flows, but the treasury in which all the gifts of the Creator are laid up for a sinful world; and therefore the form of the expression, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ, "this life is *in his Son*," instead of the equally customary form, διὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ, "*through his Son*." Here, then, we see the relations of the Father, the Son, and the redeemed church to one another. The Father is the giver, the Son is the dispenser of the gifts, and we are the receivers. Hence we gather from this ἐν τῷ υἱῷ, "*in the Son*," a high and sustaining view of the mediatorial character of the Son of God. He is the living centre of Jehovah's working in the kingdom of grace, the uniting and sustaining Head of the church and the creation, in whom, and through whom, the ineffable compassion of the God-head flows forth upon the children of his grace. The church is in Him (ἐν αὐτῷ) (Col. i. 18); the universe (τὰ πάντα) is in Him; the life eternal is in Him; and it was fitting that in Him should all fulness dwell (Col. i. 17—20); and all this is but carrying out the original idea of Scripture, that all things were created in Him (ἐν αὐτῷ) (Col. i. 16); and, therefore, the power, wisdom, and mercy of the Deity, in creation, redemption, and glorification, in eternity as well as in time, find their development and manifestation in the Christ. In our text, how-

ever, the apostle only contemplates one side of this manifold fulness. He holds Him forth in his relation to us as weak, perishing, sinful creatures, and says, "There is in Him what you need, even the gift of eternal life." Your Father speaks to you from heaven as the kind and loving God, the source and fountain of grace. He has given you the very gift which you need, even eternal life; and this gift, glorious and blessed as it is, is greatly enhanced by the channel through which it comes, even Jesus your Friend and Redeemer, who knows your weaknesses and wants, for He has felt them all.

"Though now ascended up on high,  
He bends on earth a brother's eye,  
And still remembers in the skies  
His tears, his agonies, and cries."

8thly. *To have the Son is life.* The transition from the eleventh to the twelfth verse is very natural, for if it be a fact that life is in the Son, the way for us to make sure of the life is, to receive the Son of God, who contains and dispenses it. Hence the words of the apostle, "He that hath the Son hath life." Luther says, in his strong language, "Wer Christum hat, der hat Alles, und wer Christum nicht hat, der hat gar Nichts" (He that has Christ has every thing, and he that is without Christ has nothing). In receiving Him it is that we become the sons of God (John i. 12), and this is explained to mean believing on his name. To have Christ, therefore, to receive Christ, to come to Christ, to be in Christ Jesus, and to have Him dwelling in us, are all delineations of the living faith which appropriates his gifts and rejoices in his manifold fulness (see John iii. 36. v. 24). Life, in every form and measure, is connected with Jesus, the Son of God, in the holy Scriptures (John i. 4. v. 26. 1 John v. 20. Col. iii. 3, 1-5), and therefore He is preached and proclaimed in the gospel as the refuge and hope of a perishing world. To be in Him is to be delivered from condemnation, to receive Him is salvation and

eternal life, to imitate Him is our highest aim as Christians, and to be like Him is our highest conception of eternal blessedness. He that hath not the Son of God hath not life; but, as the apostle elsewhere asserts, the wrath of God abideth upon him. He is not in the way of life and peace, for these are to be found in Jesus alone, and, whatever be his vain hopes and delusions, he has not and can have no well-grounded prospect of meeting the issues of eternity with joy. He has not life, for he refuses Him who is the source and fountain of life, and so he shall and must remain unquickened and unblest, a wanderer and an exile through the ages of eternity. His portion is death, and with the author and in the region of death he shall have his portion and dwelling-place for evermore.



## CHAPTER XIII.

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Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύητε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ Θεοῦ.

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ παρρησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτὸν, ὅτι εἰάν τι αἰτώμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ, ἀκούει ἡμῶν.

Καὶ εἰάν οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀκούει ἡμῶν, ὃ ἂν αἰτώμεθα, οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἔχομεν τὰ αἰτήματα ἃ ᾠτήκαμεν παρ' αὐτοῦ.

Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσῃ, καὶ δώσῃ αὐτῷ ζωὴν, τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσι μὴ πρὸς θάνατον. Ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον· οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ.

Πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν· καὶ ἐστὶν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον.

Οἶδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· ἀλλ' ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ, τηρεῖ ἑαυτόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ.

These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God ; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us :

And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

If any man see his brother sin a sin *which* is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death : I do not say that he shall pray for it.

All unrighteousness is sin : and there is a sin not unto death.

We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not ; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

Οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἐσμεν,  
καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ  
κεῖται.

Οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ  
ἦκει, καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν  
ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν·  
καὶ ἐσμεν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ  
υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. Οὗτός  
ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ  
αἰώνιος.

Τεκνία, φυλάξατε ἑαυτοὺς ἀπὸ  
τῶν εἰδώλων. Ἀμην.

And we know that we are of  
God, and the whole world lieth  
in wickedness.

And we know that the Son of  
God is come, and hath given us  
an understanding, that we may  
know him that is true, and we  
are in him that is true, *even* in  
his Son Jesus Christ. This is the  
true God, and eternal life.

Little children, keep yourselves  
from idols. Amen.

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THE apostle, now coming to the close of his epistle, mentions

more specially the character of the class to whom he writes, and the general purpose which he has in view.

I. *Believers addressed.* The church is the depository and guardian of the Christian faith, and to her all the epistles are directed. For her the gospels were written; and, to cheer her on her heavenly journey, and brighten her path, the promises are suspended over her like stars in the night. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 John v. 13). The epistle is written, therefore, for believers, and addressed to believers. So Paul writes to "all that be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints" (Rom. i. 7); to "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 2); to "the church of God which, is at Corinth" (2 Cor. i. 1). He writes unto "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. i. 2); to "the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. i. 1); to "all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons" (Phil. i. 1). Such is Paul's custom in all his epistles. James writes to the twelve tribes scattered abroad (Jas. i. 1); and Peter to "the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bythinia." Thus Paul, and John, and Peter, and James, agree in the practice of writing their epistles for the churches, and sending them to the churches. From this we draw the following conclusions: that it is surely the duty and privilege of those who receive letters to read and understand them; that it is surely great presumption in those to whom letters are not addressed, such as popes, and prelates, and cardinals, to prohibit those from reading them to whom they are addressed; that inasmuch as the popes, and cardinals, and princes of the papal hierarchy are not addressed or mentioned in any of the epistles, or in the New Testament, these officers are no true functionaries of the church of Christ, but belong to the apostacy and Babylon mentioned in the Scripture (2 Thess. ii. 1—11).

Rev. xvii. 1—6); and, lastly, that the gospels, the epistles, and, indeed, the entire word of God, are the property of the whole redeemed church of God, which no man can deprive her of without offending God, and which she cannot surrender but at her peril. Two things are peculiar to the form which John uses in our text.

1st. He uses the word *name*, saying, “These things have I written unto you that believe on the *name* of the Son of God.” *Name*, “ὄνομα,” (ὈΝ), has, in Scripture, a very important and extensive meaning. It implies *authority* (Acts iv. 7. Matt. xxi. 9. xxiii. 39. John v. 43); it implies *character*, dignity, renown (Matt. x. 41. xviii. 5); and very often it is used *emphatically* to denote the nature, properties, and attributes of the being to whom it is applied (Matt. xviii. 20. vi. 9 (Tholuck). Luke i. 49. xii. 28. Rom. ix. 17). Hence the common expressions “to hallow his name; reveal his name; honour, glorify, and call upon the name of the Lord;” all which expressions are based upon the principle that *the name of God* is an emphatic, periphrastic expression for God himself. So, in our text, to believe on the name of the Son of God is precisely the same as to believe on the Son of God, but more emphatically stated.

2dly. It is peculiar that the apostle uses the name *Son of God* in this passage. He does not say, “to all that believe on Christ, but “to all that believe on the *Son of God*,” and this arises, no doubt, from the doctrine of Sonship which occupied such a conspicuous place in the mind of the apostle John. John alone applies the strong γεννάω, “to beget,” to God and to the Spirit of God, to denote the commencement of the new spiritual life (John i. 13. iii. 5, 6, 8. 1 John ii. 29. iii. 9. iv. 7. v. 1—4, 18). These passages shew clearly that the fundamental doctrine of this epistle, and of the whole Christian system, as contemplated by this loving apostle, was the *believer’s sonship*. The word *repentance* (μετάνοια) does not occur in the writings of the apostle John, nor does he ever speak of the *conversion* of the soul to God (ἐπιστρέφω, John



xii. 40, is a quotation), as the others do in their writings. His eye is fixed only on the Father, the Son, and the children, and all his words, illustrations, and figures are drawn from these relations. He feels the endearments of *this* family circle so lovely and attractive that he rarely ventures out of it, and has neither eyes, ears, nor heart for any thing save the relations, the duties, the dangers, and the hopes of the children of God.

II. *The purpose.* This is clearly stated in this verse, viz. "That ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." He would have the soul filled with holy, peaceful, joyous confidence in God, and therefore he has drawn forth in such a loving manner the relations of the Father, the Son, and the children to one another. Eternal life, including all that contributes to the soul's well-being and glory in Him and in eternity, is the free gift of God to the believer, and the aim of our apostle, in all his delineations of the Father, the Son, and the family, is to persuade us that that royal gift is really ours; that by faith we become really and truly, and for ever, the children of our heavenly Father; and that it is our duty and privilege to be assured of the fact, and to rejoice in it with unspeakable satisfaction. No writer speaks so fully, so frequently, and so lovingly of our confidence and assurance in the love of God. How, then, according to the apostle John, do we realize this divine confidence? By keeping the commandments of God (1 John ii. 3); by the love of God being perfected in us (ii. 5); by abiding in Christ (ii. 28); by purifying ourselves, as He is pure (iii. 3); by loving the brethren (iii. 14); by loving in deed and in truth (iii. 18, 19); by the Holy Spirit dwelling in us (iii. 24. iv. 13); and by the inward witness in the act of believing (v. 10); so full and various are the manifestations of the indwelling life of God in our souls, and from each and all of them we are entitled to rejoice before our Father, in the full assurance of eternal glory. Hence the words, "These things

have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe (continue to believe, press onward in the way of faith) on the name of the Son of God."

III. From this assurance of faith the apostle naturally turns to the *confidence of prayer*, which is the substance of the fourteenth and fifteenth verses. "This is the confidence which we have in Him (*πρὸς αὐτὸν*) towards our heavenly Father, that if we ask any thing according to his will, He heareth us." It is impossible to determine with certainty from the Greek to whom *αὐτὸς* refers, as God and the Son of God are both spoken of in the twelfth and the thirteenth verses; nor, indeed, does it make any material difference, as, according to the apostle, the Father and the Son are ever present, and never separated from one another, in the contemplation of the believer. The meaning is this: the source of our confidence is, that God hears our prayers. We may gather, therefore, from the passage the following—

1st. The believing soul has *confidence* (*παρρησία*, "boldness") in his God and Father, and may come boldly to the throne of grace in every time of need (Heb. iv. 16). Let us never forget that all the ways of God from the beginning, so far as they have been connected with grace, have been calculated to inspire his children with confidence in Him. His long-suffering love to us inspires confidence; His many great and precious promises are intended to remove our guilty suspicions and tranquillize our sin-stricken hearts. Is He not the living, eternal fountain from which all our blessings for time and eternity flow? He has opened his heavenly mansions to the weary and heavy laden, and to all returning prodigals He opens his bosom and his heart. Did He not give his Son to die for us, and will He not, with Him, also freely give us all things? Surely all this should give us confidence in Him. He has loved us from eternity, and every step in our life is but a fresh

manifestation of his love to our souls. The Bible, providence, prophecy, the Son of God in his atoning love, the Spirit of God in his sanctifying powers, are all *his gifts*, and all intended and calculated to restore the intercourse between us and God which sin and Satan had interrupted.

2dly. It is natural that this *confidence should lead to prayer*. He is the author and dispenser of innumerable blessings, and we are ignorant, needy, and sinful creatures, so that the longing heart turns to Him as the only one who can and will satisfy all its desires. He invites us to approach Him in the confidence of filial reverence and love. He commands us, and all men everywhere, to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting (1 Tim. ii. 8); He has given forms of prayer in the holy Scriptures, to teach us how to pray; He has recorded many examples of men, sinful, as we are, whose prayers have been heard; and finally, to gain our entire confidence and induce us to approach Him boldly, as children should approach their father, He commands us to approach Him in the name of Jesus Christ the Mediator.

3dly. There is *one condition necessary* to our prayers, in order that they may find an answer from on high, and that is, that they be *κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ*, "according to the will of God." "If we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us." The reason of this limitation is too obvious to require any elucidation. We are ignorant, in a great measure, of our relations to the divine Being, to the future history of the church, and to the enemies with which we are surrounded; we are selfish also, and would often seek what seemed our own welfare at the expense of the general good; nor would we willingly choose the path of sorrow, though we know well it is the path of holiness and glory. Our moral perceptions are blinded by selfishness and sin, and the powers of conscience and will so weakened by the fall, that we cannot discern, in the entangled web of providence, the line which leads directly to the better land; and if we did see it, we would be unable to follow it. In

such circumstances, it is the love of God which leads us to revelation as the fountain of the *divine will*, when we may be led by a wisdom that cannot err, encouraged by a goodness that will never deceive, and supported by a power that can make us conquerors, and more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. His will is the measure of your prayers; and it is in the consciousness of its being so that our hearts are enlarged into the dimensions of his divine love. We are not limited in Him, but in ourselves; for in all that pertains to the kingdom of grace—the dispositions of the renewed nature, the fellowship of love, the fruits of the Holy Spirit, the assurance of faith, and the brightening hopes of a blissful immortality—He is far more willing to give than we are to receive; and however deeply we may have drunk from the fountains of his love, his gracious word ever is, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” Even the sincere worshipper, like the mother of Zebedee’s children (Matt. xx. 20), may ask what would serve only to pride and worldly honour, and must be mercifully refused; and James mentions some of the fearful excesses to which the perverse selfishness of men may lead them on this subject (iv. 3). How kind and merciful, then, is that word of our Father in heaven through the apostle Paul, “Likewise also the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered (Rom. viii. 26).

4thly. The 13th verse is intended to *enlarge our confidence* in the goodness of our prayer-hearing God, and obviate all our suspicions and objections. “If we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” Observe here the limited and peculiar meaning of the word *ἀκούειν*, “to hear,” which does not refer to the physical faculty of hearing, but to the approbation and approval of the will, and the meaning is, “If we know that



He *approves* of our prayers, as agreeable to his will, and commanded by Him, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. This use of ἀκούειν is peculiar to John in the New Testament, and occurs ix. 31. xi. 41, 42. 1 John v. 15; so the Hebrew שָׁמַע is used (Ps. x. 17). Observe, further, the fine idea which the apostle gives us in this verse of the goodness and power of God: "If we know that He hear, we know that we have." Nothing can come in between Him and us: his glorious *will* effectuates, with irreversible certainty, all the purposes of his grace. Almighty power and infinite wisdom will accomplish, in the best possible way, the petitions that are according to the will of God. The effect flowing instantaneously from the simple volition of God, is the highest idea of eternal creative power. There are many instances of this in the Holy Scriptures. Longinus (περὶ ὑψους, "On the Sublime,") quotes Gen. i. 3 as an example of this kind of sublimity (see and compare John xi. 43. Matt. viii. 3. Mark iv. 39); and from the same text of Moses the Arabs no doubt have taken the quaint but sublime description which I heard quoted in Damascus, قال الله كن وقبل ماوصل من كه البرن كان, "God said (to the universe) BE, and before He had reached from the B to the E, it was!" Some such ideas of the power and majesty of God, added, indeed, to infinite love and goodness, must have been in the mind of the apostle John when he wrote the sentiment, "If we know that *He* hears, we know that *we* have our petitions." We notice, also, the noble confidence with which the Lord speaks of and to us, for the κατὰ τὸ θέλημα, "according to his will," is not added, though no doubt it is understood after ὃ ἂν αἰτῶμεθα, "whatsoever we ask," in verse 15. The idea is this, Ye are my children and friends, and I have such confidence in your filial love and prudence, that I can give you a *carte blanche* to fill up at your pleasure, whenever you need my assistance in your journey through life. "Whatsoever ye ask" ye shall receive; for, being my children, you will not be likely to ask what is contrary to my will.

So the same apostle records the words of the Saviour (John xv. 7) to the same effect, "If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you," (see also John xv. 16. xiv. 13, 14. xvi. 23); and we, on our part, should we not respond to this fatherly confidence by a worthy return of all filial affections, and joyous obedience in all things; by drawing largely from the treasures of his grace? for therein we honour Him the more, the more we take; by imitating his Son, who sought nothing and did nothing for his own honour and glory, but every thing for the glory of his Father in heaven. May we cherish the spirit of prayer and holy communion with God! It is indeed the essence of all true religion, and rises out of the doctrine of the believer's sonship in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

"Visit, Lord, thy habitation!  
Breathe thy peace on all therein,  
Peace, the foretaste of salvation,  
Peace, the seal of pardoned sin.

Prince of Peace, be ever near us!  
Fix in every heart thy home;  
In this sweet communion cheer us,  
Quickly let thy kingdom come."

IV. *The sin unto death.* From prayer in general the apostle now comes to a special case, where the ordinary principles that guide us in our supplications are to be somewhat limited in their application. To understand this difficult passage (verses 16 and 17), we must lay down the following principles, which perhaps may lead to the right exposition. The great difficulty is admitted by all.

1st. There was, in the primitive church, an order of spiritual men, endowed by God with the *gifts of healing*, who stood immediately between Jesus, the fountain of living waters, and our diseased and death-possessed nature. These men were the public, miraculous witnesses that Jesus was not dead but alive;

was risen, and ascended to the right-hand of the Father, from whence the life-giving powers were to proceed. Now it is manifest that, since these men never received a commission to raise *all* the dead, and heal *all* the sick, they must have had some discriminating power to determine when the healing virtue of Jesus was to be applied. In this way the apostle Peter was led by the Holy Ghost to the healing of Eneas (Acts ix. 34), and the raising of Dorcas from the dead (Acts ix. 36—43); so Paul perceived that the cripple had faith to be healed (Acts xiv. 9), and in his ministry among the Gentiles, though the power of God was mightily upon him, yet it was by no means an indiscriminating power. In many cases the power seems not to have been exercised at all; and in others, those who sought it were punished by the Lord. The Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of hands, but they were guided by the Spirit of God to lay their hands only on the proper persons. Paul healed many, yet he left Trophimus at Miletum sick (2 Tim. iv. 20). He could heal others, but he could not heal Trophimus.

2dly. As the *tendency* of all sin is to lead the sinner to death, moral and physical, so in proportion as the life, power, and holiness of God are manifested in the church, which is the body of the Living One, will this tendency become manifest. In the primitive church, therefore, we find the awful holiness of a sin-avenging God breaking forth in the immediate punishment of certain transgressors. Thus Ananias and Sapphira, who lied to the Holy Ghost and tried to deceive the apostles, were smitten by the power of God, and gave up the ghost (Acts v. 3—12). Their sin, ἀμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον, was a sin *unto death*, and the apostle Peter did not pray for it; exactly as our passage says, “ἔστιν ἀμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον, there is sin unto death. I do not say that he shall pray for it.” In like manner the Corinthians, having abused the symbols of redeeming love in the administration of the Lord’s-supper, were variously punished; some with weakness, some with sickness, and others

with death (1 Cor. xi. 30), and the apostle Paul did not pray for them ; and this is another illustration of the doctrine taught in our text, to which we may add the death of the old, disobedient prophet mentioned in 1 Kings xiii. 20—30. I take it for granted that, in all these instances, the death is only temporal, and does not affect the eternal salvation of the soul ; and the sin which causes it would be analogous, in the Christian, to the **חטאת למיתה**, the sins unto death of the Jewish church, such as idolatry, incest, blasphemy, &c.

3dly. The *life* and *death* mentioned in the text cannot be eternal life and eternal death, for God never promised in his word to remove from any one the curse of eternal death and endow him with the blessings of eternal life at the asking of another. But God has promised to heal the sick members of the body of Christ by the prayer of faith, and to raise them up, and to forgive their sins (Jas. v. 14—16). Comparing this passage of James with our text, and applying the above-mentioned principles to the exposition of it, we arrive at the following conclusions : (1) The sin unto death is a sin which the Lord, for the punishment of the sinner, and to be a warning to others, visits with temporal death. (2) The *any man* mentioned in the text must be limited to those who have the gifts of healing, or the elders of the church, mentioned by James. (3) The promise of life, given in the text, is the promise of restoration, or recovery, by the power of God, at the prayer of faith, to their former state of health ; so that we may paraphrase the verse thus, “ If any man among you, endowed with the gifts of healing, see a brother labouring under the effects of some sin, which, however heinous, you are led by the indwelling Spirit to believe is not to be punished with the judgment of temporal death, like Ananias and Sapphira, then, in that case, you are warranted to pray for it, and God has given to your prayer the promise of restoring him to life and health. There are, indeed, cases where it is the manifest intention of God neither to heal the sick nor raise the dead, and in such



instances, as well as in others where temporal death is to be inflicted for the punishment of certain sins, you are not required to exercise the gift of healing: they have sinned unto death, and no special gift of healing is to be exercised in their case. This exposition is strengthened by the 17th verse, "All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin (*ἁμαρτία*) or rather there is sin not unto death." All sin leads to death, for the wages of sin is death; and all unrighteousness, viz. every violation of the law of brotherly love, is sin, though, in the mercy of God, there are many of them that shall not be visited with the punishment of temporal death.

V. The substance of the 18th verse may be termed the *believer's safety*; and, as it is naturally divided into several particulars, we must attend to them in their order.

1st. *He is born of God* (see iii. 9. 1 Pet. i. 23). This is the new birth unto righteousness of which the word of God speaks so abundantly, as the turning point of the Christian's life, and the commencement of all holiness, loveliness, and moral excellence in the human character. Before this there may be virtue and honourable conduct; there may be a sense of patriotism, and a feeling of what is just, and noble, and praiseworthy among men, as Cicero, in his Offices, and the history of heathenism abundantly prove, but there is no pure and genuine love to God, no heavenly-mindedness in the human soul, no ennobling, filial relations to the great Father in heaven. All these have their root and origin in the birth from above, and can spring forth and flourish in the renewed soul alone, and hence the frequency with which the Scripture speaks of the necessity of being born again, of receiving a new heart, a new name, a new life, a new nature. There are, indeed, great varieties of expression, but the doctrine is still the same, and denotes, in all cases, the change from a state of nature to a state of grace. It contains the feeling of bitter sorrow for having neglected the Saviour and served sin so long, and hence it is

called repentance ; it effectuates a total radical change in the entire conduct and character, and therefore is called conversion ; it brings us into a new world, a new life, new hopes and aspirations after God, where there is a growing conformity to the image of the Saviour, and is fitly called a new birth ; it carries us over the boundaries of Satan's dominions, and places us in the kingdom of divine grace and love, where the Good Shepherd leads us by the fountains of living waters, and may well be called a translation (Col. i. 13) ; it is denominated our citizenship, *πολίτευμα* (Phil. iii. 20), because it gives a name and a place in the New Jerusalem where the family and the Father, the redeemed and the Redeemer, the sanctified and the Quickener are to meet in the unutterable enjoyments of the heavenly sanctuary ; so also it is called union with the Saviour, a life of faith, a walk of love, a renewing of the mind, a state of grace, a new nature, a coming to the Lord, &c. ; all which are essentially the same as our text, "Whatsoever is born of God sinneth not." But, it may be asked, who is the *agent* in this new creation, the author of such abundant grace ? It is attributed to God (John i. 13) ; to God the Father (1 Pet. i. 2) ; to the Son of God (Is. viii. 18. Heb. ii. 13) ; to the Holy Spirit (John iii. 3. Tit. iii. 5). It is, therefore, a divine work ; in which, like creation, providence, and redemption, the three persons of the Godhead are interested and engaged. Indeed, it would be easy to shew that every divine act is, in Scripture, equally attributed to each of the three persons. But what are the *means* used in producing this great change ? Sometimes it is attributed to baptism (John iii. 3. Tit. iii. 5) ; sometimes directly to the power of God, without any human agency (John i. 13. 1 John iii. 9) ; sometimes to the working of faith (1 John v. 1. Gal. iii. 26) ; sometimes to the seed of the Word of God operating in the heart (1 Pet. i. 23). These are not contradictions, but various, diversified representations of the one manifold, glorious work of God in the renewing and sanctification of the human soul—different sides of the same subject

—all true, and beautiful, and instructive as the many-coloured bow of heaven which bespans our world, and protects it from another watery deluge. As to the *mode* in which the regeneration of the soul is accomplished, we know of it as much and as little as of any other work of God. The grace of God working in the heart is, indeed, compared to the dew falling silently in the night season, and the rain upon the tender grass, and the wind blowing where it listeth, and the fire melting the rocky heart in pieces, and the anointing oil of the sanctuary gladdening the weary, comforting the weak, and healing the maladies of all wounded Samaritans; but yet the nature and progress of the divine procedure can be known and spoken of only by its *effects*. These are, indeed, manifest, and not to be gainsaid or mistaken, for they are fruits of righteousness; the operations of the Holy Ghost resulting in a life of purity, activity, and peace, where the world is rejected, the flesh crucified, the temptations of the enemy met and resisted, the hopes of immortality realized, and, above all, where the love of God and the Redeemer is the ruling motive and all-constraining power. But this leads me to notice,

2dly. The consequence mentioned in our text, “He that is born of God *sinneth not*,” *οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει*. This does not mean, as Lücke contends, that he that is born of God does not commit the sin unto death, though I admit that may be a consequence drawn from it in his sense of the sin unto death, for it is to be believed, certainly, that those who are really born of God shall not apostatise from the truth of the Gospel and finally perish; nor does it mean that the soul of the regenerated is so filled and interpenetrated with the power, and presence, and love of God that it does not and cannot sin any more at all, for that would contradict other Scriptures, as well as the whole experience of the church of Christ, and render the Lord’s Prayer itself an impertinent formulary for the disciples of the Lord; but it means that he who is born of God does not sin willingly and

presumptuously, but seeks in his heart and soul, in his life and conversation, to do only the will of God, and to grieve and quench the Holy Spirit as little as possible. His heart is in heaven though his body be upon the earth ; he is thoroughly washed, and needeth no repetition of it save his feet, which come more immediately into contact with the ground (John xiii. 10). Contrasted, indeed, with our former life, called the state of nature and unregeneracy, our gracious condition, as the renewed children of God, may be called a state of purity, holiness, and perfection, for the seeds of perfection are in us, and the longings of the soul are after the ineffable, always to be longed after, but ever unattainable perfections of the divine Redeemer. The highest conceivable perfection of a creature, indeed, does not consist in having all that can possibly be imparted, but in the endlessly enlarging capacity of receiving more ; not in having scaled the heights of divine perfectibility, so that he can say, " Now there is no more to be had, no more to be seen or attained in the regions of creation or the ages of eternity," but in the unwearied, ever-renewed, and expanding, immortal vigour which shall lead us onward and upward, from triumph to triumph, over the secrets of nature ; from glory to glory in the many-mansioned house of the great Father, from star to star in the ever-brightening galaxies that encircle and beckon us unto the unsufferable light of the unapproachable God. And when shall our flight have an end ? It shall never have an end ! The seeds that are sown in the regenerated soul shall flourish immortally in the kingdom of glory above. We shall run and not be weary ; we shall walk and not be faint ; the perfection will consist, not in our ceasing to ascend, but in the rapidity of our flight ; and, after ages of ages have run their course, we shall still find fresh sources of enjoyment in the Creator and the creation ; fresh, and new, and endlessly diversified glories revealing themselves to the church and the universe in the adorable person of the Redeemer, in whom, as



the God-man, the church and the creation, both in their relations to God and to one another, are to be headed-up and established for evermore (Eph. i. 10).

3dly. It is added in our text, "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one (ὁ πονηρὸς), toucheth him not." The first clause *τηρεῖ ἑαυτὸν*, "keepeth himself," is undoubtedly intended to shew us our responsibility in the work of sanctification; we are not machines, to be moved and operated upon by mere impulsive forces, but reasonable, answerable beings, receiving or rejecting, improving or misusing the good gifts of God. God is our keeper, and yet we must keep ourselves; it is our duty to believe, and repent, and resist the temptations of the devil, yet He is the author of the faith, and the repentance, and the victory. We must work the work of God while it is called to-day, and yet He it is that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleasure; in one word, the human and the divine wills must co-operate in the work of sanctifying grace, and that is the truth taught in the words, "He keepeth himself," καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἅπτεται αὐτοῦ, and the wicked one toucheth him not, viz. does not touch him so as to injure him. So *יִשְׁמַר* (1 Chron. xvi. 22. Job v. 19), where the LXX. has *ἅπτω*. The truths to be learned from these words are, that the devil is a personal agent; that he seeks to tempt and does tempt the children of God; but that he cannot harm or injure them. Greater is He that is in them than he that is in the world; they are under the protection and power of God, and nothing shall ever separate them from the love of God which is in Jesus Christ their Lord (Rom. viii. 32—39). This is a glorious truth, and should never be forgotten by the children of God. Satan, the ruler of the darkness of this world, is not the rightful owner, but the usurper in the dominions of God, and Jesus the Redeemer, and rightful Lord, has, so far as the children of God are concerned, broken his power. He is dethroned, and fallen like lightning from heaven. He is cast out of the domain of the flesh in the

wilderness of Judea, and out of his domain of death in the rock of the sepulchre of Christ, and without the permission of the Saviour he could not enter a herd of swine. Be not faithless, then, but believing, and be assured that, until you voluntarily yield to his devices, Satan can obtain no dominion over you. The will is the portal to the palace of the soul, and while you keep it shut the tempter's efforts are in vain.

“ All power s to our Jesus given,  
O'er earth's rebellious sons he reigns ;  
He mildly rules the hosts of heaven,  
And holds the powers of hell in chains.

In vain doth Satan rage his hour,  
Beyond his chain he cannot go ;  
Our Jesus shall stir up his power,  
And soon avenge us of our foe.”

VI. *The two parties ; the contrast* οἷδαμεν is three times repeated in the 18th, 19th, and 20th verses, and in each case followed by ὅτι ; but the force of the δὲ, which precedes ὅτι in the last instance, is very marked, and should be rendered by “however,” or “but,” and not, as in our translation, by “and.” In the 18th verse, the children of God and the children of the wicked one are contrasted in these solemn words : “ We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth, ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ, in the wicked one.” We may consider these clauses separately.

1st. *We know that we are of God* ; viz. we know that we are begotten, or born of God ; or it may have the more general sense of, “ We know that we belong to God, that we are God's people and inheritance.” For this meaning of ἐκ see John i. 47. Acts xxiii. 34. Luke i. 5. Acts iv. 6. xiii. 21. Rom. ix. 5, 24. This usage is classical (Xen. An. i. 2. 18, Epict. Fragm. 161). Let us realise, then, this glorious truth, that “ believers are the peculiar treasure and property of God,” for, in so doing, we are

providing against the trials and temptations of the evil day. Be sure that you have passed from death unto life, and therefore, like the returned prodigal, you are lying safe in the everlasting arms. Let no insidious doubts weaken the force of our convictions on this matter. It is a very and eternal truth that God has loved us ; that Jesus, his Son, has expiated our guilt on the cross ; that the Holy Ghost, the Quickener, hath drawn us to our God ; and, in the midst of manifold sins and imperfections, and in spite of the delusions of the world, and the temptations of the devil, we can say, with humble but immortal hopes, *ἐσμὲν ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ*, “ We are of God,” and his eternal mercy does encompass and shall encompass us, as a shield, for evermore. We are his and He is ours. No powers in this world, nor in the world to come, shall separate us from Him ; and, in the regions of glory, during the boundless ages of eternity, we shall realise the truth contained in these words. “ We know it,” says the apostle ; it is not a mere dim, distant hope that we may attain to the Sonship, but we know, and are sure, that we are his children, elected, redeemed, sanctified, and justified through the mercy of God in our Lord Jesus Christ.

2dly. On the other hand, we have the same conviction, that all that are not *ἐκ τοῦ Θεοῦ* are *ἐκ τοῦ διαβολου*, for the two kings and the two kingdoms are directly opposed to one another, and they include the whole human race. “ He that is not with Me,” says Christ, “ is against Me ; he that is not of God is of the devil ; and there neither is nor can be any neutral party.” World (*ὁ κόσμος*), therefore, denotes all that are not the children of God, through faith in Christ, and consequently lying under the curse of the law, and in the power of the accuser and murderer from the beginning : all in heathenism, or under the name and forms of Christianity, that are trampling on the blood of the Son of God and doing despite to the Spirit of grace. *Ὁ πονηρὸς*, here, is the same as in verse 18th, and should also be translated, not wickedness, but “ the wicked one.” The

meaning is, "All ungodly men are under the power and dominion of Satan." The word *κεῖται* shews that this is their state, and not any mere temporary condition of apostacy and alienation. They are lying in the wicked one. The words *ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ*, "in the wicked one," can be best expounded by the other phrase, *ἐν Χριστῷ*, "in Christ," as the designation of believers. To be "in Christ" means, in Scripture, to be under the power of Christ, to be doing the will of Christ; to be, in fact, united with Him as the branch is in the vine, as the stones are in the temple, and as the members are in the human body. In like manner, to be lying in the wicked one is to be under the power, control, and guidance of the devil, yielding to his suggestions, obeying the laws of his kingdom, and doing his will. This is surely very, very fearful, and may well teach thoughtless and ungodly men what the end of their slumbers is to be. There are two kingdoms—the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of Satan—and to one or other of these two you must belong. There is, and there can be no evasion, either here or hereafter, and you the reader, and I the writer of these lines, shall have our lot in one or other of these kingdoms for ever. Rise! rise in the name and strength of God, and leave the satanic wilderness, and the husks, and the swine that are wallowing there, and come back to your Father's house! Dost thou not long for something nobler and better than the wages of Satan?

"Thou hidden love of God, whose height,  
 Whose depth unfathomed no man knows;  
 I see from far thy beauteous light,  
 Inly I sigh for thy repose.  
 My heart is pained, nor can it be  
 At rest, till it find rest in Thee!"

No, indeed, brother man, whosoever thou art that meetest these solemn words, there is, and there can be no real rest for thy soul save in Him who made it. But there is rest *there*.



There is divine mercy to meet and satisfy all thy need in the fulness of the Son of God. Come to Him ! Oh, I would entreat thee, I would indeed, with a very tender and loving voice, if I could, to come to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world ! Oh, may God grant that we may attend to the things that belong to our peace before they are hidden from our eyes ! Amen.

VII. The deity of Christ. This is the substance of the verse according to the exposition which I hold to be the true one, though there are other truths not to be neglected in the verse (20). We observed already that the *δὲ* after *οἶδαμεν* connects the 19th with the 20th in an adversative correlative way, thus, "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in the wicked one ; we know, *however*, (to neutralise the power of the wicked one,) that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding," &c.

1st. The first great truth taught in our text, therefore, is the *coming of the Son of God*, which, more than any other, reveals to us the common love of the Father and the Son, the Sender and the Sent One, as well as the love of the Holy Spirit, by whom the divine and the human natures were united, and the Mediator of the new covenant qualified for his earthly and heavenly work. Our epistle begins and ends with this glorious theme (1 John i. 1, 2. v. 20), and throughout the entire epistle it occupies a very conspicuous place (i. 2. iii. 8. iv. 3, 9, 14. v. 20) ; nor, when we consider the weighty consequences to man and the creation which depend on the incarnation of the Son of God, will we be inclined to think that the apostle mentions it too often. It is connected, in the closest way, with the whole scheme of redemption, and the office and constitution of the person of the Mediator, and forms, we may say, the radiating centre from which the operations of Jehovah, in his love and his power, in providence and redemption, proceed forth unto the circumference of his boundless empire. Indeed, if

there be two facts in the Bible, or in the past and future history of the universe which can be properly called the poles in the mighty purpose of the redeeming God, around which all the various parts, prophecy and history, faith and hope, the workings of providence and the proclamations of grace, perpetually revolve, like the orbs in the starry sky ; they are the *coming in flesh* and the *coming in glory*—the cross and the crown—by which the faith and the life of the church have been sustained from the beginning, and all ages, dispensations, before, and in, and after the fulness of the times united in the glorious person of the Redeemer. If you consider it well, there is no fact in the history of mankind which, for the wonderfulness of its nature, for the stupendous grandeur of the conception which it developes, and for the incalculable results which spring from it, may for a moment be compared with the coming of the Son of God. Its author is God ; the incarnated person is the eternal Son ; the mode of union and manifestation is the Holy Ghost ; the natures united are the divine and the human ; and the result is the glory of God, and the salvation of every human being that wishes to be saved. What a light this *fact* throws over the dark and cloudy paths of the divine administration ! Judaism is no empty nomenclature when its rites and ceremonies, its types and symbols, are seen leading to and centering in the person of the God-man ; the sin of our race, the holiness of the divine Lawgiver, the majesty, beauty, and worth of the Christian dispensation ; the doctrine of the torments of Hell, and the eternal glory of the redeemed church, are all natural and easy to be believed, are all seen as necessary parts of one grand system of the divine moral government when we admit the great fact of facts, the wonder and glory of the universe, “ The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.” This may comfort us, as John intimates, when we believe that the world lieth in the wicked one. Be of good cheer, the wicked one has power but the Holy One is

stronger; the enemy may enthrall his millions, and hold them in his chains, but the *Son of God is come*, and hope and life beam over the prison-house in which we lay bound. He, the Son of God, is come, and we, redeemed, justified, and strengthened in Him, are enabled to resist the temptations of the devil. He came in the flesh, and the fountains of eternal mercy are opened up in Him for a weary and perishing world; He is coming again in glory, and the eye of hope brightens at the prospect of a king, and a kingdom of universal righteousness and peace.

“Hark the glad sound, the Saviour comes!  
 The Saviour promised long;  
 Let every heart exult with joy,  
 And every voice be song!

Our glad hosannahs, Prince of Peace!  
 Thy welcome shall proclaim;  
 And heaven’s exalted arches ring  
 With thy most honoured name.”

2dly. *Διάνοια*. “And hath given us an understanding.” Bishop Burgess and others make a full period after the words “The Son of God is come,” and supply the word “God” as the nominative to the verb *δέδωκεν*, giving this sense, “We know that the Son of God is come. And God hath given us an understanding that we may know Him that is true (viz. Jesus Christ), and we are in Him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.” But (1) the grammatical structure seems to require that *ὁ Υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ* should be the nominative to both *ἦκει* and *δέδωκεν*; and (2) it is more in keeping with the gospel plan, and with the character of the Mediator, that Jesus should give us the knowledge of God, than that God should give us the knowledge of Jesus. The Son is the revealer of the Father, John i. 18. xiv. 9. xii. 45. Col. i. 15. 2 Cor. iv. 4. Heb. i. 3), and this, indeed, is the great idea which is contained in the doctrine of mediation. *ὁ ἀληθινὸς*, “Him that is true,” there-

fore, I refer to God, and the office of Jesus is to lead us to the knowledge of Him. The apostle adds, "And we are in Him that is true"—in his Son Jesus Christ. The last words, "in his Son Jesus Christ," are expository of the former, to shew how we are in the true one. How are we in the true one? We are in Him by being in his Son Jesus Christ. The words *ἐν τῷ Υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ* are corrective and explanatory of *ἐσμὲν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ*. The fact that we are in the power, protection, and love of the true and faithful Jehovah is manifested by our taking refuge in his Son, the Advocate and Mediator, Jesus Christ. This, *οὗτος*, "the same" (John i. 7), viz. Jesus Christ, is the true God and eternal life. This glorious Mediator, the Son of God, is the true God manifested in our nature, and the blessings of eternal life are found in Him.

3dly. *Objections answered.* It was not to be expected that this striking passage, in the concussion of conflicting opinions dividing the sentiments of men for ages, should escape the attacks of the enemies of the orthodox faith. It has been the subject of fierce debate during 1600 years, nor is the controversy likely to be settled in our days. Until the time of the Arian controversy the passage is little used by the church fathers, from which Lücke rashly concludes that it was not, in the early ages, referred to Christ. It is enough that we know, from the Holy Scriptures and from the history of the church, that the doctrine of the deity of the Son of God was one of the main pillars of the temple of faith from the beginning; and, as the Scripture is the armoury for the armies of the faithful in all ages, it is natural that in the various attacks of the enemy they should use those weapons which are most suited to the occasion. This text was used against the Arians in the Council of Nice with great effect by Athanasius, who calls it a written demonstration of the divinity of Christ (Glass. Philolog. Sacra 714), and added, that, as Christ said of the Father "this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God" (John xvii. 3), so John said of the Son, "this is the true God, and eternal



life." From the time of the Arian controversy in the primitive church to the rise of Socinianism and the Polish Brethren in Germany, there is not, so far as I can find, any variation in the exposition of the text. The *οὗτος* is referred to the nearest antecedent, as, on grounds of philology and sound criticism, it naturally must be, and Jesus Christ is thus declared to be the true God and eternal life. This, I say, is the simple and natural meaning, and even Lücke admits that appearances are in favour of referring the *οὗτος*, *this*, or *He*, or *the same*, to *Jesus Christ*, the word immediately preceding it. Of the reformers in Germany, Erasmus is the first who hints, "*Hic est verus Deus—referri potest ad Deum verum Patrem qui præcessit*," but he is by no means decided in his views of the text. Grotius admitted the Socinian interpretation, which was thence adopted and defended by S. Clarke and the English Unitarians. Thus we see the stream of interpretation in the purest and best ages, and, indeed, through the whole period of the history of the church, runs in an orthodox channel, and it would be difficult to find a scholar who, on philological grounds alone, would receive and defend the Socinian interpretation. The natural interpretation is strengthened very much by the fact that *ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος*, "the life eternal," must also be a predicate of *οὗτος*. Whoever is the "true God" of the text must also be the eternal life, but "life" and "eternal life" are so naturally referred by the Scripture to the Son of God (John i. 2, 3, 4. 1 John i. 2. Col. iii. 1—5) that it was felt that, if the first and second predicate both referred to the same subject, then the *οὗτος* could be no other than Jesus Christ, in whom, according to the Scriptures, the life of the world dwells. Hence the vehement efforts made by the English Unitarians to separate the two predicates into two sentences by introducing a second subject, giving, in substance, the following meaning, "He, the Father, is the true God, and Jesus Christ is the eternal life." This, though advocated by Clarke, and Benson, and others, was felt to be too like an effort by all means to get over the stubbornness of an

orthodox text, and all the German philologists (see Lücke), rejecting the idea of two subjects on grammatical and philological grounds, refer both the ὁ ἀληθινὸς Θεὸς and ἡ ζωὴ αἰώνιος to οὗτος. This being, then, settled, we ask, is it according to the custom of John to call God “the eternal life,” or to represent Him as the life of the believing church? I answer, never. But Jesus, the incarnate Son, is the way, the truth, and the life. In our epistle (i. 2) He is called the eternal life—“Eternal life is in the Son of God” (v. 11); “He that drinketh his blood hath eternal life” (John vi. 54); “He that believeth on Him hath eternal life;” and life, in every form, and in every conceivable way, is attributed, in the New Testament, to Jesus Christ the Mediator (John xi. 25. xiv. 6. Col. iii. 4. 1 John i. 2. v. 20). We hold, therefore, that the moral evidence is as overwhelmingly strong as the critical in referring “this is the true God and eternal life” to Jesus Christ, the nearest and most natural antecedent. Besides, is it not something like a trifling, trivial, and identical expression to make the apostle say, “God is the true God and eternal life”? Is such the habit of the apostle John? We must answer in the negative. The object of the apostle is, not to assert that God is the true and faithful God, for none doubted that, but to assert the dignity, nature, and offices of Christ the Son of God, and for this object the assertion of the twentieth verse—“He is the true God and eternal life”—is in entire keeping both with the immediate neighbourhood of the passage and the doctrine of John concerning the Logos in general (John i. 1—14. 1 John i. 1, 2, [v. 7]. Rev. xix. 3). But what are the objections urged against our translation and exposition of this text? The following are the principal, and we mention them in their order. (1) It is strongly pleaded that the orthodox interpretation is not *necessary*; that the passage will fairly bear another translation; and to ground such a weighty doctrine as the deity of Christ on a doubtful passage at the end of an epistle is neither safe nor judicious. I answer, the argument, as stated by the objector,

militates against himself. The passage is doubtful. Fair and honest minds cannot make out whether, according to John, Jesus Christ be here called "The true God and eternal life," or not. Does not this shew that Christ and God were so identified in the mind of the apostle that separating them from one another was impossible? All your doubts are in *our* favour. Had John been a Unitarian I venture to say the reader would not have been left in doubt with regard to his sentiments. The modern Unitarians, at least, express themselves intelligibly on this subject. If Jesus Christ were a mere creature, I can never believe that men inspired of the Holy Ghost to instruct us properly would have been permitted to leave us in doubt on a subject which involves the great question of idolatry. The holy, jealous God will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images, and if Jesus Christ be a created being the ambiguities of John, and the apostles generally, on this matter are criminal and even blasphemous. Nor can the Unitarians *blame* us for adoring the incarnate Redeemer as "the true God and eternal life," for John the apostle has led us into it by following what appears to be the natural meaning of his words. (2) It is pleaded that ὁ Θεός, or ὁ ἀληθινός Θεός, cannot be here given to the Son of God, because, in the Scripture, ὁ Θεός is peculiar to the Father, and Θεός without the article is the proper designation of the Son. Origen, indeed, made this distinction, which was much more in accordance with the subtle ethereal nature of his erratic genius than the sober truth of the word of God. There is no such distinction in the Greek of the New Testament. Θεός is applied to the one living and true God as well and as distinctly as ὁ Θεός (Matt. vi. 24. xix. 26. Luke ii. 14, 52. iii. 2. John i. 6, 18. iii. 2. Acts v. 29. Rom. i. 7, 18. 1 Cor. 4). Even the form "God the Father" is often expressed in Greek without the article Θεός πατήρ (Winer. Lect. 18) (1 Cor. i. 3. 2 Cor. i. 2. Gal. i. 1. Phil. i. 2. 1 Pet. i. 2). So the words "the children of God" may be expressed in Greek without the article on either word υἱοὶ or τέκνα Θεοῦ

(Rom. viii. 14. Gal. iii. 26. Phil. ii. 15. 1 John iii. 1, 2. Rom. viii. 16. On the contrary,  $\delta$   $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  is applied to an idol (Acts vii. 43), to the devil (2 Cor. iv. 4), to the goddess Diana (Acts xix. 37) ( $\tau\eta\nu$   $\theta\epsilon\acute{\alpha}\nu$  in the received text, but the better reading is  $\tau\eta\nu$   $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$ . See Bloomfield). The distinction, therefore, which Origen and the Socinians make between  $\delta$   $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  and  $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  is not founded in fact, and can serve no purpose of philology or criticism. But is it so, that  $\delta$   $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  is never, in the New Testament, applied to the Son of God? Far from it. John calls Him  $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  (John i. 1); he calls Him  $\delta$   $\text{Κύριός μου καὶ } \delta$   $\text{Θεός μου}$ , "my Lord and my God," as confessed by Thomas (Acts xx. 28). Paul calls Him  $\delta$   $\text{ὢν ἐπὶ πάντων } \Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ , "the supreme God" (Rom. ix. 5). In 1 Tim. iii. 16 he calls Him  $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  without the article. In Heb. i. 8 he addresses Him as  $\delta$   $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ , "the all-creating God." So in Rev. xix. 17 (compare verse 7), and in 1 John v. 20 He is  $\delta$   $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  with the accompanying epithets—"the great God" and "the true God." It is a fact, therefore, that the Father is, and may be equally called  $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  and  $\delta$   $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ , and that the Son is, and may be equally called  $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  and  $\delta$   $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$ ; and, therefore, the assertion that  $\delta$   $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  is limited to the Father and only  $\Theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$  given to the Son in the Scriptures is false and unwarrantable. (3) Dr. Lücke thinks, that if John wrote the words of Jesus (John xvii. 3), in which he calls the Father "the only true God," it is not likely that in our epistle he could have intended to call the Son "the true God and eternal life." The conclusion is false. The Father is the only true God, and yet the Son is the true God; just as Jesus is the only Lord (1 Cor. viii. 6. xiii. 3. John xiii. 13. Eph. iv. 5), and yet this does not deny or shut out the Lordship of the Father. I agree rather with Athanasius, who asserted, against Arius in the Council of Nice, that, as Jesus himself called the Father the true God, so John asserts the same of the Son, and this agrees fully with the assertion of the same apostle from the lips of Jesus, "I and my Father are one" (John x. 30). The complex character of the Mediator explains all these seeming inconsistencies, and harmonizes both



the word of God and the system of revealed truth. Multitudes of texts delineate the Redeemer as the weak, mortal, dying man, the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He is born among us, lives in our families, and shares all our human sympathies, and is in very deed the true and real brother of the human race. He testifies to the truth of God as the prophet, and dies an ignominious death on the cross; so that, if ever real humanity could be predicated of any one, it is of Jesus of Nazareth, the Virgin's Son. Yet now and then in his life the indwelling glory and majesty break forth, so as to give clear indications of his higher and eternal nature. He is the Son of God and God manifested in the flesh, the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He can call his Father God, and we can call Him God, and the seeming inconsistency which Lücke mentions between John xvii. 3 and 1 John v. 20 does not arise from any other source save the nature of the subject. Admit that the Redeemer is God and Man, and all is clear, consistent, and harmonious. These are the chief arguments against the application of the words "this is the true God and eternal life" to the Lord Jesus Christ, and I think they have been sufficiently answered. As to the relative referring sometimes to the more distant antecedent, nobody, that I know of, denies that (Acts iv. 11. vii. 19. x. 5, 6. 2 Thess. ii. 9), but then it is always on the ground of necessity, and because the more immediate one will not make sense. In the passage before us there is no such necessity, except in the perverted convictions of the Unitarians, who will not allow Jesus Christ to be the true God and eternal life. Grammatical necessity there is none; and if there be any moral necessity in the case, it does not arise from the sentiments of John, or the analogy of the faith, but from the unbelief of the objector. On the whole, I would conclude, in the words of Dr. Doddridge, "This verse is an argument for the deity of Christ which all those who have wrote in its defence have urged; and which I think none who have opposed it have so much as appeared to answer."

VIII. εἰδώλα, *idols* (verse 21). It is natural that the apostle, having led the church to the true God, who is also the fountain of eternal life, should warn them against the deadly sin of idolatry. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." εἰδωλον means naturally an *image*, a shade (Hom. ii. 5, 449; compare Od. xi. 476 and Xen. Mem. i. 4). In the New Testament it means an idol-image (Acts vii. 41. 1 Cor. xii. 2. Rev. ix. 20). It is the פְּסִיל of 2 Chron. xxxiii. 22. Is. xxxiii. 22, and by a naturally simple metonymy it signifies the idols themselves—the idol-gods of the heathens, as well as their visible images. In this sense it corresponds with אֱלֹהִים (Numb. xxv. 2. 2 Kings xvii. 33. Compare 1 Cor. xviii. 4, 7. x. 19, and (גִּלְגַּלִּים) 2 Kings xvii. 12, xxi. 11, 20). Two things are forbidden, therefore, in the text.

1st. The *worshipping* of *idols*, such as the heathen do; all false gods of the imagination, to the worship of which our fallen, terrified, shivering nature is so prone. Timor fecit Deos. The mythologies of Greece and Rome were a great system of idol-worship, and are condemned in our text. So, also, the angel-worship and the saint-worship, the Mariolatry, the priest-worship and the relic-worship of the papists, are all forbidden in the words "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Jehovah is our God, Jehovah alone. Every other worship is idolatry.

2dly. The worship of the true God by *images* (εἰδώλα) is forbidden in our text, as well as in many other Scriptures, and those who do so are not the little children of the apostle John. There is one way of acceptable worship, and no other in the Bible, even Jesus Christ the Righteous One, who is the way, and the truth, and the life. The worship of God by images is an insult to the Son of God, as if He were not a just and all-sufficient Mediator, and directly 'contrary to the command of Jehovah, who declared to the chosen nation, out of the flaming fire of Sinai, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven

image, or the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them, for I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God," &c. (Ex. xx. 4).

It has often appeared to me one of the wonders of the papacy, and not to be accounted for without supernatural, viz. diabolical influence (2 Thess. ii. 9), that, venerating the name of God and professing to be the disciples of Christ, and having the Holy Scriptures in their hands, they should yet go on in a system of the most manifest idolatry for ages, loving, practising, and doing the very thing which the God of heaven forbids. "Thou shalt not bow down to them," and yet they bow down to them. "Thou shalt not worship them," and yet they worship them. It is, however, the character of that great antichristian system to mix truth and error indistinguishably together, and thus inspire its votaries with the confidence which belongs to truth alone. John's last solemn words in this epistle are to guard believers against all such systems of will-worship and idolatry. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

IX. *Conclusion.* We have now finished the exposition of this loving epistle of the disciple whom Jesus loved, and surely we have found its waters very refreshing to the soul, and the quiet, peaceful spirit which it breathes a balm for all our wounds. We have avoided the shoals and quicksands of controversy as much as possible, that our gaze into the ocean-depths of divine love might be calm and undisturbed. There is in the epistle a majestic peacefulness which I have ever sought to imbibe myself, and to share with the beloved brethren, as we pass through this stormy world into the haven of eternal rest; but I have ever felt my weakness and incompetence, not so much as to learning, human wisdom, and the spirit of impartiality, though in these also lamenting my deficiency, as in the spirit of faith and love, the exercise of holy affections, and the fellowship with the Father and the Son of which the apostle speaks. He

that is nearest to the throne can speak most worthily of the royal mind, and he that leans most on the bosom of the Father and Redeemer can speak best of the love of God to sinful man. O, if we were living in that unutterable communion with Jehovah, in which self, sin, the world, the universe, all, all is lost and forgotten in the fervour and intensity of love; if we were walking with the beloved in his gardens of spices; if we were dwelling in the secret place of the Most High, under the shade of the Almighty; the exposition of this epistle would be easy indeed, for we would stand in the place where the writer stood, and think, and feel, and speak as the children of our heavenly Father. Our thoughts would be the breathings of divine love, and our words life, and peace, and joy. We can only say that our longings have been after this serene and blissful fellowship of love, and that our sincere and honest endeavour has been to meditate and write only in the spirit of the apostle. May God forgive what is earthly and sinful in me and in what is mine, and may He bless with a thousand blessings all that is his own! Farewell, beloved reader, farewell. Grace be with thee. Amen.

THE END.







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